

JAMES NAYLER,
THE REBEL SAINT
by EMILIA FOGELKLOU.

translated from the Swedish by
L. K. YAPP.

A vivid study of the sensational career of one of the most remarkable figures of the Cromwellian period.

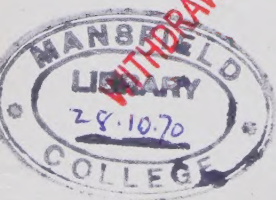
In that stirring age of mingled political and religious extravagances, James Nayler a leading Quaker became known throughout the land as the arch-enthusiast.

So many have come to look on Quakerism as a movement essentially founded on quietness, sobriety and discipline, and as remote from all extravagance of word or deed, that it is with something of a shock that one finds it closely associated in its early days with the boiling political enthusiasms and wild religious fancies that ran through Cromwell's army. In that army Nayler had seen nine years of active service before he became a Quaker. He was already known in the army as a powerful preacher, and enjoyed a period of striking success as a leader in the new movement.

Of a very sensitive and somewhat unbalanced temperament, overwrought by travel, persecution and illjudged adulation, he allowed himself to be led by a party of adoring disciples into the city of Bristol in a manner closely imitative of Christ's Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem.

His downfall was swift and retribution terrible. His misguided conduct was openly and unsparingly condemned by George Fox and the other Quaker leaders. He was tried for blasphemy before the bar of the House of Commons. The case lasted many days amid considerable public excitement. Convicted, he narrowly escaped death and the cruel punishments which were publicly inflicted on him are a grim indication of the barbarism and bigotry of the period.

The life of this extraordinarily beautiful yet misguided character who was farmer, soldier, preacher, writer, convict and martyr is now graphically related and its inner complexities ably interpreted by the eminent Swedish historian Dr. Fogelklou and is attractively presented to the English reader in Mrs. Yapp's excellent translation.

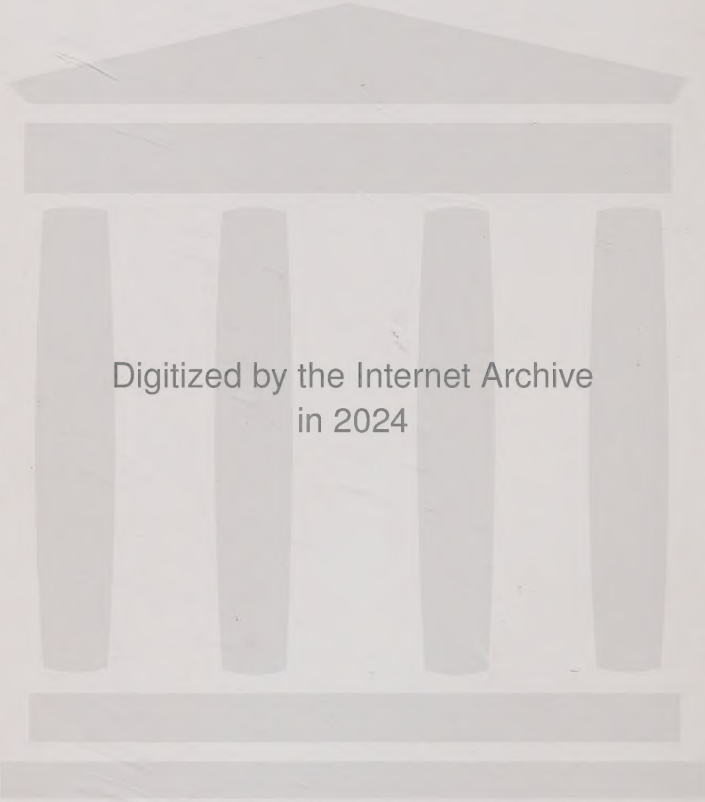


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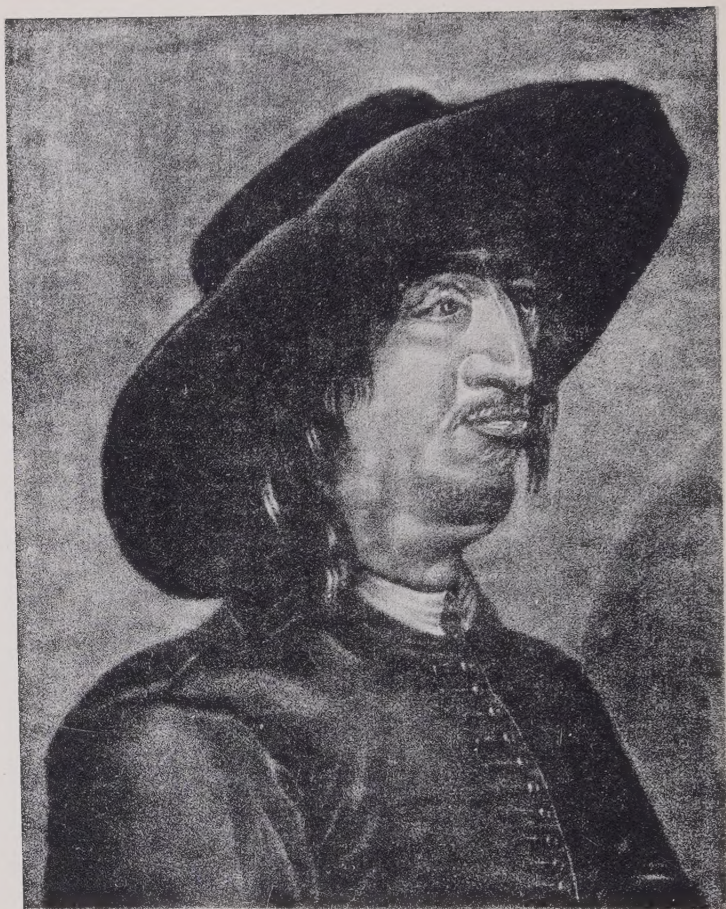
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JAMES NAYLER

THE REBEL SAINT



JAMES NAYLOR

L. P. Norton fecit

Born at Antisloe near Wakefield in Yorkshire. Was an Independent, & served Quarter Master in y^e Parliament. Arrey about y^e Year 1646. Seized Quaker in 1655. Punished as a Blasphemer 1656. Author of many Books & Dyed at Holm in Huntington Jan. 1660. Aged 44.

JAMES NAYLER AS A YOUNG MAN

From the mezzotint by T. Preston

JAMES NAYLER

THE REBEL SAINT

1618—1660

An attempt to reconstruct the chequered
life history of a singular personality from
the age of the Commonwealth

by

EMILIA FOGELKLOU

Translated from the Swedish

by

LAJLA YAPP

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

WHILE writing a book on a psychological subject, I was driven to a more and more serious study of the history of the Quakers, and especially of James Nayler, whose peculiar type and destiny seemed to offer particularly valuable material for my investigations.

As my research advanced, the historic figure began to disentangle itself from the specific intentions with which I had approached it. Nayler's powerful drama forced me – at least primarily – to trace the adventures of a soul, rather than to write a psychological treatise. I was confronted with something far more remarkable than I had expected: a living monument over that which I should like to call *the tragedy of Immanence*.

I was first acquainted with James Nayler through W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*. M. R. Brailsford's book, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army* brought me additional facts. From the beginning, however, my chief interest was the interpretation of these facts. I was therefore compelled to search independently, both for further data and for the connections which might explain the facts.

As I got immersed in the abundance of old and new material, I came to the deep conflict between Nayler and Fox. This conflict seemed to me the central point and something, not only of the past but of the present: it was the ever-recurring tension between idea and power, liberty and authority, individual and society. What was at stake then, is at stake now.

If I had intended to write for an English public in the first instance, I should have taken for granted a general knowledge of the political background. Although the early chapters have been considerably shortened, certain portions have been allowed to remain, so as to illustrate the intimate reactions between historic events, social developments and human destinies. I have confidently left the abbreviations to the judgment of my translator, whom I wish to thank for pleasant co-operation.

I am greatly indebted to the Librarians of the Friends House Library in London for their indefatigable help, not only in sending me literature and in arranging for the transcription of manuscripts, but also in giving me personal assistance during the time when I had an opportunity of working on the spot. Miss Maja Cronquist, Teol. Lic., has placed some useful Quaker literature at my disposal and discussed with me certain historic problems. Mrs. Ingrid Petander, Fil. Kand., has deciphered and copied letters from the seventeenth century. Professor B. Liljegren has facilitated my work in the British Museum. Mrs. Mab Maynard and Mrs. Signe Anderson, née Cederblom, have enabled me to make personal investigations in several London archives. I wish to express my thanks to them all.

EMILIA FOGELKLOU.

STOCKHOLM, *May*, 1931.

PREFATORY NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR

THE task of translating this book has been far more arduous, but therefore not less interesting, than I anticipated when I undertook it at the request of the author. She has done everything in her power to lighten the work and has introduced me to many of those who had previously been of great assistance to her at Friends House, London. Doctor Norman Penney has pointed out discrepancies in the text copied from old letters and tracts and suggested most valuable improvements in other directions; Mr. John L. Nickalls and Miss Muriel A. Hicks have checked a number of references, provided the information necessary for revising some of the Notes and the Bibliography, and saved themselves no trouble whenever I have turned to them with a fresh query. Should any inaccuracies still remain, the fault is certainly not theirs. Miss Richenda Payne has criticised the English MS., and Miss Bertha L. Bracey the proofs, both making many valuable suggestions. Mr. Percy Stanger has advised me in several practical matters, and I am indebted to Mr. Nickalls also for assisting to select the illustrations and for arranging to have most of them photographed at Friends House. The Great Seal of the Commonwealth has been reproduced, thanks to the courtesy of the authorities of the British Museum.

I cannot adequately express how much I owe to the hospitality of Friends House and to Woodbrooke College, Selly Oak. In the Libraries of both I have been made to feel a welcome guest instead of a

troublesome intruder. Mr. H. G. Wood has discussed various points, and Miss A. R. Wells has been ever ready to help, more than once acting as custodian of rare tracts, kindly lent from Friends House, for my use.

Among others who have so generously given of their time and knowledge, I wish to mention my old friend, Mrs. Dorothy Walton, who read the English MS. in instalments and rescued it from many blemishes that might otherwise have disfigured the text; Professor C. W. Valentine, who solved the problem of translating some intricate psychological expressions; Mr. Wilfred Bonzer, who has enabled me to consult works of reference in the Birmingham University Library; Miss Kerstin Bildt of *Kungliga Biblioteket*, Stockholm; Mrs. A. M. Lockley; and, last but not least, Miss Lily Sturge, whose keen interest in the varied fortunes of *James Nayler*, both as a character and as a piece of work, has been a constant source of encouragement and help.

The first few chapters only have been somewhat abridged, and one, *Some Practical Problems*, has been omitted, as the incidents had no direct bearing on the theme of the book and were well known to students of early Quaker history, while the problems themselves were discussed in other connections. Some of the Notes and References have been added, as well as an Index. The author had made use of both originals and transcriptions of the *Sworthmore Manuscripts*, but the references have been traced to the originals, and the Bibliography altered accordingly. The MSS. in question are referred to as the *Swm. MSS.* The Bicentenary Edition of Fox's *Journal*, London 1891, has been quoted in practically all cases for the early excerpts. His *Journal* edited from the MSS. by Norman Penney, Cambridge 1911, referred to as *Journal*, has been used

for the later and more voluminous selections, a few of them being found in the *Short Journal and Itinerary Journals*, Cambridge 1925. A Collection of *Sundry Books, Epistles and Papers written by James Nayler*, London 1716, is, for the sake of brevity referred to as *Works*. Actual quotations from W. C. Braithwaite are confined to *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, and those from M. R. Brailsford, unless otherwise stated, to *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army*.

LAJLA YAPP.

BIRMINGHAM, June, 1931.

POSTHUMOUS FAME

A GERMAN folio from the beginning of the eighteenth century, a chronicle of Protestant heresies called *Pantheon Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum*, gives much space to all kinds of "Quäckergräuel." "Quäcker Quackeley. Das ist Elende Lumperey, Hümplerey, Stümplerey auch Büberey," rhymes one of the authors with delicious and arrogant fluency.¹

"Those who believe that Messiah has not come, have raised up a soldier called Nayler. James Nayler being the chief Quaker, it is only fair to begin with him," runs the story. The authors bestow very little attention on George Fox. James Nayler, on the other hand, is the subject of not less than four different accounts in the voluminous old book, and he has been portrayed on five full-page engravings. He is referred to as the "King of the Quakers" who had deceived his lawful wife and made other women believe that they were pregnant with the Son of God. At last we are told that so many thousands of people had assembled when he was going to suffer his punishment that to prevent serious disturbance he had to be taken out of the hands of the executioner.

In addition to extracts from the records of the trial, all kinds of sensational and cocksure allegations are delivered with crushing authority in order to discourage all good Lutherans from such heresies. There is an illustration of the Quakers' "*Unhöflichkeit gegen den König in Engelland Carl den anderen*," where they, without removing their hats, proffer their petitions. According to this German version, the downfall of Charles I was due to the

treason of "the Scotch Quakers," "*die Biebel in der Hand, den Teufel im Hertzen.*"

These distorted pictures have borrowed traits from Johannes Bockhold of Münster and from other German Anabaptists who, during a whole century, had been imprinted on the Lutheran consciousness in exaggerated and grotesque outlines as veritable monsters, set up by the devil as a rival show to the Reformation. The "noble and most wise" member of the Hamburg Corporation, who had paid for the printing of the large volume, and "instructed" some of the "ministry" in his city to provide the subject-matter, wished this chronicle of heresies to be a bulwark in defence of the pure and unadulterated faith. No doubt the readers examined its pages with mingled awe and laughter. Among those branded as godless madmen were not only the great "arch-traitor" James Nayler, but also Descartes and Spinoza.

Whereas James Nayler was regarded by his contemporaries and by the next generation as a rebel against God, and an ill-fated blasphemer, the modern investigator would look with pity on the poor fool, ranging him among the cases of megalomania which are now mercifully sheltered by the walls of lunatic asylums. When one comes into such close grips with madness, however, that one can begin to explain it from within, the sufferer ceases to be merely a "case" and grows into a tragic human destiny with windows opening wide towards the infinite.

James Nayler's real contribution and character have been almost forgotten, while the one short episode of his life which the heresy-hunter embellished is for ever linked with his name. Enemies wrote the history of "that very eminent person" while embarrassed friends endeavoured to cover it up.

The life of James Nayler possessed, nevertheless, a depth and a spiritual expanse which caused the very abnormality itself to become part of the peculiar development of an idea, of an age, and of a soul. The epilogue of his life was not only proof of a turning from error, as his best friends believed, but of a fresh advance. James Nayler's career was full of dramatic incident, both in his inward and outward life. The spectator is struck with wonder as he begins to interpret the strange play of reactions between outward circumstances and inner experiences of soul, between the interdependent problems of communal and individual life.

The curtain is raised on a scene bathed in sunshine, and the promise of spring fills the atmosphere, although catastrophe has only just passed by. We watch the energetic labours of the working day, followed by a hazy dream performance produced by over-exertion, adoration, and mental disorder. The act is a passion-play of intense suffering, a soul-stirring tragedy enacted before the whole people. But this is not the end. In the first pale light of dawn we witness a human resurrection in the transfigured light of active peace, love, and universality such as we dare dream of only somewhere beyond the gates of death. The light that radiates around him is white, but not white from inanition, for all the colours of life are blended in it.

As the old-fashioned love-story used to end at the wedding, so the religious-psychological interest often enough comes to a standstill at the conversion, or perhaps the particular heresy, if that was most pronounced. And no doubt many a human life has become stationary and rigid after passing through one single momentous decision, leaving nothing but inevitable consequences, or old age and death for the biographer to record.

There are souls, however, who live at a quicker pace. They pass through processes of disintegration and renewal, and travel farther through undiscovered altitudes of mind where the air is thinner and the dangers less ordinary. Stagnation is not their special danger, but tension so strained that the strings of their souls may snap. A resurrection after such experiences demands not only unusual powers of renewal, but also a humility of soul which is prepared to accept what possibilities may still be left. "If the doors of perception are cleansed . . . everything appears to man as it *is* – infinite."

POLITICS AND RELIGION

THE patriarchal policy which allowed a king to prescribe to his people in matters of religion was being questioned in seventeenth-century England as it was in Sweden under the younger Vasas. The Scotch people had early upheld the rights and duties of evangelical subjects to resist any attempt to impose arbitrary rule in matters that concerned their conscience and religion, and these principles won ready support in England. While the Thirty Years' War was waged on the Continent between Protestantism and Catholicism, the fight in England was to centre round the consequences of the Reformation: freedom of conscience and, up to a point, the application of Protestant ideals in domestic politics. This thought was like a ray of light, illusive and dim at times, but now and again powerful enough to set men's minds aflame with a desire for something bigger than the salvation of the individual, something that should deliver the whole community and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The English people of pre-Restoration times read the Bible as probably no nation has ever done before or since, and this practice has left an ineradicable mark on the national character. Men and women sought in the words of the Bible their consolation and their weapons, their spiritual nurture and their oracles, not yet aware of any risks attached to interpretation of the texts according to their own conscious or hidden wishes. They made constant use of biblical idioms in their conversation, and expressed their joy and sorrow, their compliments and curses, in the words of the Old Testament especially.

The Puritan's hatred, of "Baal," "Babylon," and "Rome," his detestation of "idols," ceremonials, and ecclesiastical pomp, were combined with a passion for *right* as he saw it, and a readiness to sacrifice his life, if need be, in order to overthrow a wrong, whether this wrong took the form of a tax, a law, or a crown. Puritanism might well be said to be a Renaissance on English soil of the religion of the ancient Prophets of Israel.

It is well known that the pick of the army which fought against the king and the Established Church under Fairfax, Lambert, and Cromwell consisted of Independents and not of the more moderate Presbyterians. "It is fit I tell you what *Independency* is: It is *Genus* generalissimum of all Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and Schisms. A generall Name and Title under which they are all united as Sampson's Foxes were by the Tailles."¹ To the Independents, politics and religion were two closely allied things; that is the point of these observations. The influence possessed by laymen in their congregations revealed a democratic tendency, and their ideal State resembled, like that of the Anabaptists, a republic founded on brotherhood. Religious freedom presupposed political freedom; this was their reason for taking up arms. In the name of Christianity they delivered the first formidable thrust against patriarchal government in the State and in the Church. They felt like a people of kings and priests, for each individual among them had paid dearly for his conviction. All their activities were governed by this thought: "that you may lay down all your Crowns at his Feet, who hath given you the Victory; that so the Lord being set up as King in every Conscience, all may be subject for Conscience sake"² – as James Nayler wrote in a letter to Cromwell.

¹ Clement Walker, p. 27.

² *Works*, p. 187.

In 1647, when Charles I was taken prisoner and the Presbyterian element in Parliament wanted to dissolve the troublesome army of Independents, the latter refused to disband, chose its own representatives and forwarded through them to the Council of the Army "An Agreement of the People for the firm and present peace upon grounds of common rights." The first of the demands insisted upon was as follows: "That matters of religion and the ways of God's worship are not at all entrusted by us to any human power, because therein we cannot remit or exceed a little of what our consciences dictate to be the mind of God without wilful sin: nevertheless the public way of instructing the nation (so it be not compulsive) is referred to their discretion."¹

The leader of the advanced reform party, the *Levellers*, was Colonel John Lilburne – "freeborn John," as he was often called. Like many others, he bombarded the army with pamphlets on equality, free speech, and liberty of conscience. The agitators were said to carry the sword in their right hand and Lilburne's epistles in their left. The idea of a Christian republic was kindling their spirits, and entire regiments, with their commanders, were rapidly won over for this cause. The whole army seemed to be "one Lilburne throughout, and more likely to give than to receive laws,"² we read in a communication to Parliament. The soldiers were no hired mercenaries, but free Englishmen who had drawn the sword to fight for the well-founded rights and liberties of the people, and who were ready to give their lives without pecuniary compensation. Officers and men were united in the same longing for God's kingdom on earth. They expected all, for they had given all. "*Ich wünschte meine Sein*

¹ S. R. Gardiner: *History of the Great Civil War*, Appendix, vol. iii.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 245.

gleichsam auszulöschen und nur die Dinge reden, die mächtigen Kräfte erscheinen zu lassen," writes Leopold Ranke, the German historian, of these fateful years.

From 1646 to 1651 food was dear and scarce, and a number of *Diggers* began to cultivate the open commons. This called forth relentless opposition from the majority of the large landowners. Gerrard Winstanley wrote spirited articles in defence of the *Diggers*, and appealed several times to General Fairfax and his officers, who showed considerable sympathy with them. In innumerable pamphlets which poured upon the army like midges, he and others demanded possibilities for earning a living wage, so that no one might be forced to beg or steal from sheer destitution. The Government should be elected by the people, and laws and statutes be in accordance with the Bible. Christ, the Saviour of all, was the greatest, first, and most sincere of all Levellers that the world had seen. Therefore, those who governed England ought neither to fear, nor be ashamed of, nor hate the Levellers. Other countries were still lying in bondage, and so was England, though she was nearer freedom and light than they.

The political conditions seemed at one time as plastic as the stream of white molten iron coming from a furnace. An authoritative "Let there be" might change all in a new creative act. Hopes for the future ran high, and the material perspective seemed to coincide with the heavenly vision.

The ideals of the Levellers and *Diggers* were not merely quixotic fabrications but practical possibilities, such as universal suffrage, direct taxation, and the abolition of tithes, duties, and excises. Their attack was directed against ecclesiastical power, arbitrary judgments, and the unequal distribution of land.

When the Army Council demanded that the king should be beheaded, and Cromwell at last gave his consent, apocalyptic ideas spread like wildfire. The very ground upon which men walked seemed to tremble, and the heavenly kingdom to be within their reach. When it did not come with the Commonwealth, many old soldiers felt that Cromwell, whom they had made a king in everything except name, had been untrue to their common ideals, and they plotted and worked for fresh "overturning, overturning," until right should reign supreme.

The Parliament which met in 1656, and officially offered Cromwell the crown, has been called by Carlyle "The James Nayler Parliament," for to such an extent did its interest centre round a figure whose kingdom was not of this world. This Parliament condemned Nayler to imprisonment and torture, and when, three years later, he was set free, Cromwell was dead, and his régime was at an end. On the 29th of May, 1660, Charles II entered London as King of England, greeted by the rejoicing of his people.

The strong current of religious life gradually settled down into an even flow in old channels, after a magnificent attempt to break the bars of tradition and make way for the heavenly kingdom on this earth.

THE SPIRITUAL SEARCH

Not only the army, but the whole country, was seething with religious and political ferment. A generation of men and women who, from earliest childhood, had been overfed with scriptural teaching, without suffering like their fathers for the right to read the Bible, could not have the same joy of conquest that their elders had known. Either they stagnated in their inherited beliefs or they were driven by their own unrest to become seekers.

Innumerable eccentric sects sprang up from nowhere, while other groups of people persevered in quiet expectation of light for their innermost being and for the outside world in which they lived. Heretics like Anabaptists and Arminians, who had suffered persecution on the Continent, came from all parts of Protestant Europe, finding a refuge in England, which country virtually enjoyed religious liberty from 1643 to 1649. Unlike Presbyterians and Anglicans, all these laid stress partly on the idea of the Kingdom of God, with its inspiration to political and social reform, partly on the direct dependence of the personality on God's Immanence – "The Inner Light" – an expression we meet before the actual appearance of the Quakers.

The irregularities of the Independents bewildered the traditional and ritualistic Anglicans. The aversion of the Independents to all ceremonial was as deep-rooted as that of the Prophets to image-worship. Nobody was lukewarm in matters of faith. Many who in these days would naturally go to

watch a football match could stand by the hour listening to religious discussions which were also matches of a kind, played by professionals and amateurs: trained clergymen on one side and laymen Independents on the other. The Baptists, who had formulated a demand for religious liberty as early as 1614, gave so much power to the lay element that even women were allowed to preach. They foregathered often in expectant silence, a custom which was later on adopted by the Quakers. The Baptists were also opposed to taking an oath and to meeting violence with violence. Another group, the so-called *Ranters*, laid so much emphasis on direct inspiration, apart from moral self-control, that they often gave offence by their wayward mode of life. It is worth mentioning that a clergyman who was strongly antagonistic to the Quakers acknowledged, in his polemic writings, that their moral life entirely separated them from the Ranters.

The genuine "seekers" were recruited from all these groups and sects as well as from the religious movements in the army, with their decidedly political bias. "Many left . . . all visible churches and societies, and wandered up and down, without their mates; seeking their beloved, but could not find Him . . . whom their souls loved above their chiefest joy."¹ Braithwaite has pointed out that these *Seekers* were the result of the religious struggle of the age rather than of a tendency to build up new sects.

The message of George Fox gathered these scattered ideas, experiences, and movements as a uniting power – prophetic, mystic, and practical. Now that light has been thrown on Gerrard Winstanley's contribution, it is possible to find some theoretic justification for a contemporary endeavour to trace

¹ From Penn's Preface to the *Journal* of George Fox.

the origin of the Quaker principles to Winstanley's writings.¹ His books and pamphlets speak with conviction of "the Inner Light," and emphasise the value of silence. They maintain that the idea of equality should be marked by outward behaviour, and that the fight for righteousness should be waged by abstaining from all violence, for

Freedom is not won
Neither by sword nor gun.

They advocate the disestablishment of the Church and the abolition of tithes. But Winstanley's central point, the land question, was not taken up by Fox, whereas the question of the disarming of the individual gradually became more essential to the Quakers than to the Diggers. This may be connected with their different point of view. An individual can lay down arms on his own if his conscience bids him do so, but he can no more solve the agrarian problem on his own than he can the international issues of peace and war.

The Quakers inherited characteristics also from several other religious groups. Their religion, however, was not a mere mixture of ideas and practices borrowed from other sources, but an organic whole. The new movement may be likened to a tree growing in soil which others had enriched, and spreading its branches in the free air – a tree which gave shelter not only to the quiet in the land, but also to political storm-birds like John Lilburne and other disillusioned veterans of the Civil War.

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I propose to remind my readers of the early life of Mary Proude Penington, which is a typical

¹ Thomas Comber; *Christianity no Enthusiasm*, 1678.

example of the restless quest of an individual soul in this age. As a second instance I will point to a few of the stages which led Lilburne to the Quakers. These two illustrations will serve as background for the particular life-history which we are going to unravel, although they have no direct connection with the latter.

Mary Proude had grown up in an old and well-to-do Puritan family. She had diligently fulfilled her religious duties: she kept the Sabbath rigorously; each day she set aside three regular times for prayer, and attended sermons and family devotion, besides studying the Bible.

But one day it seemed to her that all these customs were outward forms which did not correspond to any spiritual truth in her own personality. Her husband, Sir William Springett, reacted in a similar way, and the young couple agreed to exclude every form of worship from their lives which did not express a truth from within. They left off wearing rings, and tore out the pages of set prayers printed at the end of their Bibles. They turned more and more into Independents, and were consequently excluded from Communion with their Puritan friends. After two years, Sir William died. Shortly afterwards a daughter was born, and the lone young mother could not be persuaded to have her baptised. It seemed to her a ceremony without meaning to the child or to herself. She made a difficult and honest stand against accepted tradition. "Through this," to quote her own words, "I waded, after some time, but soon after this I went from simplicity into notions, and I changed my ways often from one notion to another, not finding satisfaction." In utter weariness of heart, she gave up all devout practices and resolutions. She associated with people who had no religious faith or

interests, for she was tired of all theological terminology. In vain she had sought intellectual light. She inferred that no man on this earth really knew anything about God and truth. In desperation she threw herself into the whirl of society, filling up her time with music and dancing and other forms of entertainment. Nevertheless, she could not entirely rid herself of a haunting question: Why was it that God no longer revealed Himself as in Apostolic times?

One day, as she was watching the Lord Mayor's show, the hollowness of the ceremonial pomp struck her so forcibly that she asked a bystander:¹ "What benefit have we by all this bloodshed, and Charles's being kept out of the nation, seeing all these follies are again allowed?" To his answer that he knew of none except that they had got religious freedom, she retorted that this was all very well for those who had a religion, but as for herself, she had none.

In this state of resignation she found a sympathiser and – after eleven years of widowhood – a husband in Isaac Penington. He also had discovered "the deceit of all notions, and lay as one who refused to be comforted by any appearance of religion."² "At that time," he wrote further about his experiences, "when I was broken and dashed to pieces in my religion, I was in a Congregational way, but soon after parted with them, yet in great love, relating to them how the hand of the Lord was upon me, and how I was smitten in the inward part of my religion, and could not now hold up an outward form of that which I inwardly wanted, having lost my God, my Christ, my faith, my knowledge, my life, my all."³

Isaac Penington was a diligent writer. A pamphlet

¹ W. C. Braithwaite: *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

written at this time was called *A glimpse of the Heart of Man. . . . Drawn with a dark pencil by a dark hand in the midst of Darkness*. He and his wife had the natural aversion of the highly intellectual and cultured to such illiterate Quaker writings as they had come across. But "one day, whilst walking in a park, husband and wife were stopped by a newly convinced Friend, who cried out against their gay clothes and, in spite of their scoffing reply, drew them into discourse about the light and grace which had appeared to all men. The Friend was no match in argument for Isaac Penington, and sent two others better qualified . . . who talked with the Peningtons on the following day, and, says Mary Penington, 'their solid and weighty carriage struck a dread over me.' " One of them "had a message which went beyond all enquiry and objections, 'He that will know my doctrine must do my commands.' " ¹ They had both tried to find contact with God by the roads of emotion and intellect. But the revolution in everyday life that must follow the complete surrender of the will for better or worse had more far-reaching consequences in both their individual and social life than emotional worship or theoretical beliefs.

New vistas opened up to Isaac and Mary Penington where the "Inner Light" illumined their path and consecrated them to a life full of creative joy and peace in the midst of social persecution.

The new religious outlook demanded enormous personal sacrifices. It insisted upon entire correspondence between the inward and outward life. The world of faith must not be used simply as a shelter against the stormy blast; it should permeate and transform the outside world as a living ferment. It burst the old bottles which had served in the old

¹ Braithwaite: *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 502.

life. The veil between the sacred and the profane was rent in twain. All things must be sanctified.

In the life of John Lilburne another aspect is emphasised: here a relentless fighter and political irreconcilable found a way to disarmament and active peace.

Lilburne was born in 1617, the younger son of a large landowner in Durham. He was sent to a London merchant for practical training. In his spare time he studied theology and history, and began his career as a rebel by smuggling religious-political Anabaptist literature into England. This led to public prosecution, but Lilburne preferred to remain in prison rather than submit to a trial based on what he considered illegal procedure. At last he was condemned to flogging. "John Lilburne, prisoner in the Fleet . . . did this day (the eighth of April 1638)," says a contemporary report, "suffer condign Punishment for his several offences, by whipping at a Cart, and standing in the *Pillory*, and . . . during the time that his Body was under the said Execution, audaciously and wickedly, not only uttered sundry scandalous and seditious Speeches, but likewise scattered sundry Copies of seditious Books amongst the People that beheld the said Execution, for which very thing, amongst other offences of like nature, he had been Censured in the said Court by the aforesaid Sentence." Lilburne was very popular with the citizens of London, who sent in constant petitions that he might be set free. In 1641 he was at last let out of prison. In his parliamentary maiden speech, Cromwell asked that Lilburne should receive some recompense for unjust sufferings. A lucrative Government appointment was offered to him, but he declined the offer and entered the revolutionay army.

Lilburne continued to oppose injustice wherever

he found it, his sensitive conscience being embarrassing to friends and foes alike. Disillusioned in Cromwell, he retired from the army in 1644. He was often in collision with the authorities but, whether in prison or out of prison, he published pamphlets and letters demanding religious liberty and denouncing injustice. Hard treatment, handcuffs, and leg-irons could neither daunt his courage nor prevent him from securing ink.

It would lead us too far to recount the many ups and downs of Lilburne's uncompromising political fight. He was an out-and-out Independent, always on the side of the minority and of danger, never following the way of the majority and of success. Nobody ever questioned his integrity, but many doubted the desirability of letting him be at large. He was again imprisoned in 1654, and Cromwell had him sent first to Jersey and afterwards to Dover prison. Several old veterans who had once fought by his side and had become Quakers, visited him in prison. Dewsbury, Nayler's friend, was one of them. The leader of the Levellers, who had been the sworn champion of justice and freedom, experienced at last something which gave him an excuse for writing the following explanation.

"I have now the faithful and true witness in my own soul, that the Lord himself is become, within me, the teacher of my soul, and enabler of me to walk in a measure of his pure ways and paths; yea, and so dear a teacher within me, is he already become unto me, as that I with confidence believe my inward teacher shall never now more be removed into a corner; but is and shall be, as a continual voice speaking in my ears: 'This is the way, walk in it.' By this divine teaching I am now daily taught to die to sin, and led up

by it into living power, to be raised up and enabled to live in a pure measure of righteousness: and by which inward and spiritual teachings, I am, I say again, led up into power in Christ, by which I particularly can, and do hereby witness, that I am already dead or crucified to the very occasions and real grounds of all outward wars, and carnal sword fighting, and fleshly bustlings and contests; and that, therefore, confidently I now believe, I shall never hereafter be a user of a temporal sword more, nor a joiner with those that do so.

“And this I do here solemnly declare, not in the least to avoid persecution, or for any political ends of my own, or in the least for the satisfaction of the wills of any of my great adversaries, or for satisfying the carnal will of my poor weak afflicted wife; but, by the special movings and compulsions of God, now upon my soul, am I in truth and righteousness compelled thus to declare; that so I may take away from my adversaries all their fig-leaf covers or pretences, for their continuing of my every way unjust bonds; and that thereby, if I must yet be an imprisoned sufferer, it may this day forward be, for the truth as it is in Jesus, which truth I witness to be truly professed and practised by the savouriest people, called Quakers.

“And to this my present declaration, which I exceedingly long and earnestly desire to have in print, and for which I know that I can cheerfully and assuredly lay down my life, if I be called to witness the truth of it, I subscribe my name,

“JOHN LILBURNE.”¹

This declaration, called *The Resurrection of John Lilburne*, was published a year before Lilburne's death

¹ From Tuke's *Biographical Notices*, ii. 103 ff.

in 1657. Just as Isaac and Mary Penington found that their new experience wiped out the differences of class, and in that particular sense became a sort of "Levellers," so Lilburne discovered a new road of peace, where old antagonisms were bridged over and where he could lay down his arms without dishonour. He found that true ideals and reforms could be attained only by a radical change of heart in the individual, a silent spiritual revolution which eventually was bound to lead to political progress.

A PARENTHESIS: HUMAN TYPE AND COMMUNITY IDEA

WHEN the mediæval conception of a universal Church and a universal empire broke down, the nations began to lead their separate lives as "Independents." Generally speaking, this tended towards a patriarchal supremacy of the ruler over his subjects, allied in character to papal dominion, but more isolated from the rest of the world. Continental practice, however, developed more and more on lines bearing out the theory that spiritual and temporal power are different in kind, like mind and body; and that the mind does not interfere with the concerns of the body, except when necessity makes it imperative.

Religious freedom was long regarded as an article of luxury, for which there was seldom any serious need. The principle of such freedom must be based on a more or less dimly realised union of will, emotion, and reason in the individual hunger for God, which cannot be attained without sacrifice. But wherever the patriarchal ruler seemed to violate the laws of righteousness, the nation – or at least the most wide-awake section of the community – rose up and pronounced judgment, whether the ostensible reason was the theory of the sovereignty of the people or the words of the Bible: "One must obey God rather than men."

The English revolution moved, as we know, in biblical grooves of thought. Here the elected people and the elected ruler rose up against the monarchic

power which once had saved them the trouble of rising against papal supremacy. This is one of the reasons for the intimate relation between religion and politics in England, a relationship which in its tendencies is strictly opposed to the old psychological parallel where mind and body belong to two fundamentally separate regions of life.

Liljegren and *Brie* have pointed out the peculiar conditions which produced "an imperialistic human type" on English democratic soil. *Brie* regards Cromwell as the first Protestant ruler concerned with international politics – perhaps he is forgetting Gustavus Adolphus. Cromwell looked out from English windows over the whole world, and so in his way did George Fox. The latter proposed Russia, Poland, Hungary, and "Swedland" as missionary fields for spreading "the Truth." England was the country of true liberty, therefore God had entrusted England with the duty to rule.

An assumption of this kind easily leads to a practical dislocation of thought: the idea of service is swallowed up by the will to power. Prophetic rule in Israel and papal dominion illustrate the same tendency. It was this crime for which Cromwell was repeatedly denounced by old fellow-soldiers. Instead of being the vicar of a kingdom where Christ alone should wear the crown, Cromwell was accused of usurping more and more the status of an earthly ruler, exalted above all others by the splendour of his Court and by his power of making decisions.

The highly placed individual, however, is not the only one faced with the risk of such a dislocation of motives. Until they have experienced the temptations of power, no man or woman can tell what ill effect it might have on them. Every one of us has probably a small kingdom, or at least "a far too

little Marquisate,"¹ in the world of illusions, if not in the world of reality.

The idea of election, which is the foundation of both Calvinism and Judaism, had been experienced in historic reality by many ardent souls. Inflexible and commanding, this idea, like a pillar of fire, showed the way towards great deeds, as long as the sacred fire was kept burning. As the fire burnt down, the pillar was turned into a pedestal below the chosen individual. It exalted a person, instead of pointing out a road far beyond the position of this single individual, towards thoughts higher than his thoughts, and ways far more precipitous than his ways.

The old heathen belief that Deity is one with honour and success in the present, is deeply rooted in all of us. We are more ready to believe in God Almighty, surrounded by outward attributes of power, than in the self-surrendering, all-embracing love nailed to a cross. We would rather be forged together by fear than by love. Even the temperament which has risen in exaltation against a selfish power to fight for freedom and independence, is exposed to the danger of being subdued by the gods against which it fought.

This law of inertia may be discerned also in the history of the Independents. Neither Cromwell's far-seeing statesmanship, nor Milton's poetic genius, nor the prophetic vision of George Fox, were entirely free from its influence. Only when the idea of election is large enough to be embraced by a number of individuals, be it human beings or political entities, and never remains in the grasp of a single leader, can the danger be averted.

In the striking history of the Quakers of the seventeenth century this peril was undoubtedly serious.

¹ See Fröding: *Marquis de Moi-même*, trans. by C. D. Locock.

The Quakers were Independents, but their community ideal reached beyond that of individualism, for brotherhood and not patriarchalism was their governing principle, and their unity was founded, not on theoretical agreements, but on a common experience in the innermost soul – though it might be asserted that it would be easy to lose one's way into the holy of holies where all have a right of entry, for no one is master and all are brethren. The Quakers afford material for the study of an important piece of democratic psychological history within a narrow compass. Through the medium of their organisation, parallel movements and struggles in our own age may be watched and dissected as under a microscope.

The psychological conflict which is the main subject of this book bears largely on the problem of the independent human type, its difficulties, risks, and possibilities within a religious democracy based on the gospel.

JAMES NAYLER, THE SOLDIER

WITHOUT the historic background of the Civil War and of the spiritual search, it would be almost impossible to trace the outlines of a human destiny which was in a peculiar way woven into the fabric of these incidents and endeavours. The personality which "here in this world was called James Nayler" moved first of all in semi-darkness among the bands which were fighting and seeking, until, at a given time, he stood out as an individual, on whom for a moment the official and political power focused its searchlights.

Forgotten contemporary documents written by James Nayler himself or by others, his published articles, collected and reprinted after his death, and a large number of derogatory and polemic pamphlets, together with legal proceedings, parliamentary transactions, and private correspondence, are the sources which provide material for reconstructing the true history of his life, if it is not presumptuous to claim that such a debatable problem as a human life can be reconstructed. The best method of achieving this purpose would perhaps have been that of a Browning, who could have conjured forth in dramatic vividness all the varied impressions Nayler left on people of different outlook and party. But even without the aid of poetry the bare facts give us a picture full of colour and suggestiveness.

The incidents relating to the beginning and end of Nayler's career are furnished almost exclusively by his most violent antagonists. It is a fascinating

puzzle to piece together a real picture from the odd references coloured by hate or love, opposition or pity, well-meaning ignorance, pedantic desire to correct, cold detestation or overheated adoration. It is not less bewildering to compare contemporary accounts with reminiscences of the same incidents written down a few decades later. We are able to discover how the withering silence of former friends has surrounded his name with suspicion; "and others" or "another" is the expression used to describe him who was at one time the active force of events.

But he was often perplexing also at the time when his eloquence held large audiences spellbound and his writings were eagerly discussed. Where was he to be placed? Neither his social status, nor his education would fit into given schedules. "Some say that he was a Gentleman, borne and bred, others that he followed husbandry. – And though he be a man of an exceeding quick wit and sharp apprehension, enriched with that commendable gift of good oritry with a very delightful melody in his utterance, yet he either out of policy or neglect, indeavours to make the world believe he hath not at all bettered or improved it." Whenever he likes he can form logical syllogisms, using "the exact rules according to act"; he writes a legible hand, and spells English well. Further, "a gentleman, now one of that honourable Society of Grayes Inn, who was either born or bred (if not both) in the same Town . . . was also a school fellow with this Naylor and knew his friends." Thus writes the Rev. John Deacon,¹ one of Naylor's most avowed enemies.

Circumstances seem to go against the assumption that this man without any pronounced class distinction had belonged to the gentry and received a corresponding education. Tuke states in his

¹John Deacon: *An Exact History of the life of James Naylor*, p. 4.

Biographical Notices that Nayler's "father was a husbandman of good repute and property."¹ The surroundings of his childhood would, therefore, give Nayler opportunities for natural and close intercourse with people of different class and income. In hostile pamphlets his father is spoken of as "a sow-gelder," an occupation which has probably been a regular source of income on the larger Yorkshire estates, but which is here intentionally given as the only means of subsistence.

There is, however, no doubt as to the place and year of Nayler's birth. He was born in the parish of West Ardsley, or Andersley, near Wakefield, in 1618. The Plain of York, resembling in many ways the southernmost province of Sweden, still bears many traces of the Scandinavian settlers. Both dialect and racial type reveal their Northern heritage. Even the name of West Riding, where Wakefield is situated, corresponds to the Scandinavian word *treding*, or "third part," the initial "t" having been absorbed by the preceding "t." The gentle, undulating hill country which here and there encroaches on the fertile plain is still grazed by sheep as it was in the fifteenth century, when Yorkshire became one of the centres of the woollen industry. The land has for centuries been divided up into freeholdings of variable size, owned by the same type of independent men that Wordsworth described in his native Cumberland,² and that E. G. Geijer characterised in his Swedish poem *Odalbonden*.

When James Nayler was born, barely a century had passed since the Yorkshire men had taken up arms against Henry VIII, as a protest against his

¹ *Biographical Notices of Members of the Society of Friends*, by Henry Tuke, ii. 67.

² Inserted by translator.

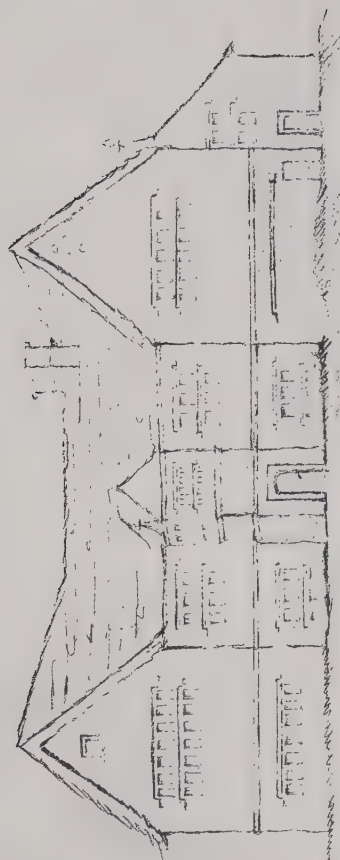
violent suppression of the religious houses (1536). The pious zeal that had struck a blow for the old faith and its hierarchy, was before long inflamed by the new religious passion of Protestantism, which rebelled both against Rome and against the Established Church. As groups of Independents, the new movement groped its way more or less consciously towards a community life built on the principle underlying the New Testament parable of the body and its limbs, foreshadowing a higher form of unity than anything accomplished by hierarchical or confessional subordination.

Everything points to the fact that James Nayler had grown up in an atmosphere of sincere piety. He "had been seeking the Way of Salvation from a Child," writes the author of his memoirs.¹ Nayler had a deep-rooted suspicion of every form of despotism, but possessed at the same time great loveliness and natural chivalry, as well as a power of adapting himself trustfully to others. These characteristics more or less presuppose a harmonious upbringing. Nayler never speaks of his parents, but it is not unlikely that, as a young man, he joined the opposite religious and political camp, as was often the case in this age of divergence. We shall probably never find out just how things stood in this respect.

Like his father, Nayler took up farming. The Church register relates that he married at the early age of twenty-one and moved to a farm of his own. Three small daughters were born in rapid succession, and later on possibly a son. When the third child came into the world, in 1643, the Civil War was begun.

Royalist forces had entered Yorkshire in December 1642. The Independents were faced with the

¹ *Memoirs*, p. x.



*Sketches near Wakefield
formerly the residence of James Nayler*

*From an engraving sketch
taken 3 Nov 1843*

ARDSLEY HALL, YORKS, TRADITIONALLY KNOWN AS
JAMES NAYLER'S HOUSE
From a sketch in the Library of the Society of Friends, made in 1843

with whom I have Served for the good of these Nations, between eight and nine Years, counting nothing too dear to bring the Government into your Hands (for the liberty of free-born Men) as many can witness with me herein."¹ At another time he speaks of the kingdom "which so much we talked on when we did not know him . . . but put the good day far off us to another generation"² – the kingdom "so much cried up . . . in words."³ One can picture him in the midst of other Levellers, discussing with ardour and sincerity the practical possibilities contained in the political pamphlets. The army council was drawn from both officers and men in General Fairfax's army, and Nayler spent seven years in this centre of Bible study and world-reforming enterprise. Separated from his wife, children, home, and occupation, he sacrificed the prime of his manhood, expecting the greatest ultimate results from this sacrifice.

After seven years, Nayler was transferred from Fairfax's infantry to Lambert's cavalry, where he was appointed to the responsible post of quartermaster. Firth points out that greater discrimination was exercised in the horse than in the foot regiments in the appointment of officers.

During the bad years between 1646 and 1651, it must have been exceedingly difficult to find quarters both for the soldiers and the prisoners. Petitions from those years complain bitterly of the deprivations which the campaigns brought upon the country people as well as upon the soldiers. It would have been impossible to carry out this task satisfactorily if Nayler had not possessed great practical ability, and impressed others by his trustworthiness. The good relations existing between the farming population and the army are specially

¹ *Works*, p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, p. 212.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

commended in Lambert's biography. Without the intermediary of a particularly suitable quartermaster, the General could hardly have won such praise. A careful record of every soldier, every lodging, and every meal had to be kept. The mere fact that Nayler was appointed seems to suggest that he was well qualified for the work.

Nor are we left only with surmise. When James Nayler, years afterwards, stood accused before Parliament, General Lambert came forth as a witness for his former officer, testifying that he had been "a very useful person. We parted with him with great regret. He was a man of a very unblameable life and conversation."¹

Fortunately, we possess besides this testimonial one vivid picture from the battle of Dunbar in September 1650. A small cottage and a church were the only available buildings in the vicinity of the bleak battlefield close to the sea. Lambert is said to have had six horse and fifteen foot soldiers in that small cottage, which must have required much neighbourly good nature.

"It was a dripping night," writes Gardiner, "but by four in the morning of the 3rd the moon shone out. By that time Lambert was hurrying regiment after regiment to the brink of the ravine. As one of the officers was speeding past, his ear caught the voice of prayer sounding in the night from the lips of a cornet. Halting awhile to listen, he gathered courage. 'I met,' he afterwards explained, 'with so much of God in it as I was satisfied deliverance was at hand.'"²

No doubt the advent of the new kingdom was expected after a last victory, as a new era of righteousness was hoped for by the men in the trenches

¹ Burton's *Diary*, i. 33.

² Gardiner: *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, i. 291.

during the Great War. More than once¹ Quaker annals record special promises made by Cromwell before God prior to the battle of Dunbar – to which I have found no correspondence in other literature. James Gough's Memoirs, however, give us an impression not only of the atmosphere among the troops after the battle, but also of James Nayler in the midst of his fellow-soldiers, encamped on the bleak moorland above the sea.

This biographer had as a young man been sitting in an inn, listening to the conversation of his elders, who at the moment were using the Quakers as a butt for their jokes and criticisms, when the door opened, and an old man stepped in. The newcomer proved to be a former officer in Cromwell's army, and to the astonishment of the merry company he took up the cudgels for the accused. Gough relates from memory the following: "You seem to wonder," he said, "that I express a favourable opinion of the Quakers – I will inform you of the reason. After the Battle of Dunbar, as I was riding in Scotland at the head of my troop, I observed at some distance from the road a crowd of people, and one higher than the rest. Upon which I sent one of my men to see and bring me word what was the meaning of this gathering. Seeing him ride up and stay there without returning according to my order, I sent a second who stayed in like manner, and I then determined to go myself. When I came thither, I found it was James Nayler preaching to the people, but with such power and reaching energy as I had not till then been witness of. I could not help staying a little, though I was afraid to stay, for I was made a Quaker, being forced to tremble at the sight of myself. I was struck with more terror before the preaching of James Nayler than I was before the

¹ *Journal*, i. 385.

Battle of Dunbar, when we had nothing else to expect but to fall a prey to the swords of our enemies. . . . I clearly saw the cross to be submitted to, so I durst stay no longer, but got off, and carried condemnation for it in my own breast. The people there, in the clear and powerful opening of their state cried out against themselves, imploring mercy, a thorough change and the whole work of salvation to be effected in them. Ever since I have thought myself obliged to acknowledge on their behalf as I have now done.”¹

When this testimony was given before the guests in the country inn, Nayler was the laughing-stock of every man. At the time when the raconteur had listened to his preaching, he was not even a Quaker. The story makes it clear that the officer regarded James Nayler as a well-known man even in those far-off days. He did not relate, however, of what the special exhortation consisted which so poignantly illumined a duty that he had not the moral strength to perform. Had it any relation to the violent persecutions instigated by the large landowners against those Diggers whose hunger had driven them to cultivate waste land? Nayler's attitude to the political agitation can only be indirectly inferred. He had been decisively influenced by Winstanley's ideas; he was intimately connected with the Levellers. Lilburne's words find an echo in his writings. Years after he had left the army, he referred to “good thinge propoundinge by ye armie, ariseinge from a true sense”² He had searched for a kingdom in the outside world, and “talked much about it.”

When he had served nine years in the army, Nayler was invalided home, obviously not at the first onslaught of illness. In 1651, he left Lambert's

¹ James Gough: *Memoirs*, p. 56.

² *Swm. MSS.*, iii. 66.

cavalry. Broken, disillusioned, with diseased lungs, he returned to his forsaken hearth, and found that his farm had suffered during his absence, as he had himself. He moved to a smaller farm at Woodchurch, close to the old one.

We might have expected that Nayler's adventurous life as a soldier would have found a happy, pastoral ending with his wife and little daughters. All his life he had endless proofs of his wife's love. But he was ill both in mind and body. His faith in mankind had suffered shipwreck.

At this time he wrote of himself and his friends in the army: "Such began to leave you (the parliamentary army? Cromwell?) and return home as Men disappointed of their Expectation; and were brought to see that was in Men, and their error in Looking at Flesh and Blood."¹

¹ *Works*, p. 756, from a tract, "Some Considerations needful to be taken into mind by such as are in Place, to ease the Oppressed," etc.

THE DISCOVERY OF GEORGE FOX

AT the same time that Nayler, together with thousands of others, was drawn into the Civil War, a young apprentice of few words, George Fox, was learning his trade with a bootmaker in the small Leicestershire village of Fenny-Drayton. His master was also a grazier; hence George Fox was set to those two trades which have played such an important part in the history of religious experience: the shepherd's in the open air, and the cobbler's in the closet.¹

In the critical year of 1643, when religious and political passions stirred the English people to the depths, rousing a storm of feeling hardly ever surpassed, the self-controlled and reticent George Fox also cut himself loose from his ordinary routine. The love that moved him was not directed towards some rosy-cheeked maid in Drayton, but towards Eternal Truth itself. He yearned for it. People talked and sang about it all around. But George could not sing, and his eloquence was confined to a stern "yea" or "nay," without any softening inflections of voice.

One night a *tremendum* shook the youth to his very marrow. His world fell to pieces. His unrest grew into agony, as he contemplated the lie of life. He saw the terrible abyss of untruth separating confession from life. The tongues of men spoke high words, but the deeds denied their reality. George Fox was not a scholar; he was a practical man,

¹ It appears to be neither proved nor disproved that Fox at one time should have been a cobbler's apprentice. Translator's note

demanding Truth in other dimensions than that of abstract logic or of emotional sentiment. It must be real to our whole being, and it must be made real in the world in which we live; otherwise the whole of existence would be meaningless and desperate.

When a man's faith crumbles like dust, he craves for solitude. The Prophet Jeremiah helped George Fox to find expression for this hunger. He heard a voice: "Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be as a stranger unto all."¹ His journal continues: "Then, at the command of God, on the ninth day of the seventh month, 1643, I left my relations, and broke off all familiarity or fellowship with old and young."

The quest was begun. Year after year it continued. Every natural desire was merged into the one all-embracing passion; shortcuts and pleasant by-ways were discarded for the one long, straight, and narrow road. Involuntarily one draws comparisons with Sidharta. Fox, however, had neither wife, nor son, nor princely power to leave behind. He brought his whole being in the full freshness of youth into his quest. Muscular, clean, wholesome, his personality was brimming over with manly strength and self-reliance. He inspired confidence wherever he went, and it was a common saying, "If George says Verily, there is no altering him." When he spoke, he hit the nail on the head, sometimes hard enough to inflict wounds. He had not much use for courtesy, but held himself forbiddingly aloof in the four long years during which he pressed on towards his fixed goal. He pierced the "armour of existence," probing deeply with the instruments of thought, will, and emotion, determined to find a

¹ *Journal*, bicentenary ed., i. 3.

living truth which would satisfy the crying need of an individual, an age, and a world.

He soon gave up hope of receiving an answer from orthodox religion, a circumstance which greatly distressed his parents. Had they not hoped to see him ordained as minister, though in the end they put him to learn a trade? With his Bible in his pocket, he wandered through villages and towns, pleasant gardens and solitary moorlands. He talked to all kinds of "professors" without attaching himself to any. But unconsciously he tested and sifted, accepted and rejected. The Bible was his spiritual sustenance. He became so familiar with its pages that he could repeat them by heart. He often slept in the open air, and his suit of leather, which Carlyle has made famous, served its purpose in battles against wind and rain and cold. Fox was emphatic that he had sufficient to live on, and he did not suffer from want. In the course of his journeyings, he came to London, which did not make a good impression on him: "I saw all was dark, and under the chain of darkness."

During these years Fox acquired a first-hand knowledge of the various shades of religious experience in England. No academic studies in theology could have given him such a direct insight into contemporary life of devotion. The ideas that he met with had been gathered from divers countries and peoples.

His chief aim was to find thought made one with life. "They had words, but the Lord Almighty sought fruits." He found "professors" who wrapped themselves up in letters, but neither did they divine nor appreciate their lack of the spirit that once lived in those letters, which was the one thing Fox was seeking.

In the end he came to the conclusion that to

acquire mattered less than to cast off; to let the draperies of the soul fall, one by one, until reality alone was left.

At times he suffered an almost despairing agony. He found many who gave him good advice. One recommended marriage, another hymn-singing, a third that he should be bled. Others again advised him to smoke or to join the army. But none of these remedies met his needs. He was conscious of the most divergent desires and beings within him; it seemed to him that characteristics of all kinds of animals like the swine and the serpent and the dog were latent in him. He had no wish to give in to these clamouring beasts – “Mind that is pure in ye” – but he understood later the value of having experienced these different potentialities. How could one otherwise “speak to all conditions” in their different states of development?

Now and again he saw an “opening” in the darkness. In 1646, Fox made what Carlyle describes as the most remarkable discovery in modern history. Fox borrowed the language of his forerunners, the Prophets of Israel, but the experience he described was his own. “My desires after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God, and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God; yet I knew Him not, but by revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of Life drew me to his Son by his Spirit. Then the Lord gently led me along, and let me see his love, which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can obtain from history or books. . . . I found that there were two thirsts in me; the one after the creatures, to get help and strength there; and the other after the Lord, the Creator, and

his Son Jesus Christ. I saw all the world could do me no good; if I had had a king's diet, palace, and attendance, all would have been as nothing; for nothing gave me comfort, but the Lord by his power. I saw professors, priests, and people, were whole and at ease in that condition which was my misery, and they loved that which I would have been rid of."¹

The teacher he had gone out to find, and had sought in vain amongst all "professors," was discovered in his own soul. He called that which he found sometimes the Light, sometimes the Seed. Every man who faithfully follows the light that he has, must, according to Fox's unshakable certainty, be led to the same discovery as he was. "The life is the Light of men" and "the true Light which shines before men" are favourite and central ideas in his new world. "Now I was come up in Spirit through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter." One moment he stands before the new glory in nature, conscious of the pulsating life round him, and asking himself whether he ought to become a doctor. But the beauties of nature faded before the wonders of the spirit. "Wonderful depths were opened unto me, beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God . . . they may receive the Word of Wisdom, that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being."²

Fox had experienced in his own personality the immanence of God, the most real of all experiences, and one that he held to be within the grasp of all. The life which inspired the powerful words of the Bible has its "seed" in every soul. But it is covered

¹ Fox: *Journal*, bicentenary ed., i. 12-13.

² *Ibid.*, i. 28.

by sins, lies, inertia, and wrong conceptions, which hide the light. These coats must be shed, and the living embryo, like the vegetable seed, must wake up from its sleep and grow towards the light, conquering all that is false, cowardly, hasty, slothful, selfish, and evil. Beliefs, knowledge of the Bible, and churchgoing, avail very little. God has set up His temple in living men and women. There everyone may be "taught by God" which way he should go, without imitating anybody else. "To the light of Christ Jesus in your consciences doe I speake, which testifies for God every day . . . this is the fast that the Lord requires, and this stands not in the transmission of tymes, nor in the traditions of men, but this was before tymes was, & this leads out of tyme, & this shall be when tyme shall be no more."¹ "In the beginning was the Word, and none knows this Word, but who are come to the beginning." His individual fight for emancipation was a very real event. And, like the Civil War that was going on, it was expensive.

"God is free, and will have his people soe . . . his grace is not ye Letter, ye Gosple is not ye Letter, his glad tidings is not ye Letter, for many poore troubled soules may be under death and condemnation and have ye Letter."²

"Church faith changeth, directory changeth, comon prayer changes & masse changes, & here is y^e 4 religions gott up since y^e Apostles days which they [have] fought for & killed one another about, but y^e pure religion doth not change, which we are of & owne . . . y^e true faith changes not for it abideth & remaineth, which is y^e gift of god & a mistery held in the pure conscience, of which we are & which is our faith; mase for y^e papist, comon prayer for y^e episcopall men, & y^e directory for y^e

¹ *Journal*, i. 335.

² *Ibid.*, i. 74.

presbiterians . . . but y^e felowshipe in y^e spirit remaines & doth not change.”¹

“Forgive us as wee forgive y^m crys papists, crys episcopall, crys presbiter Independants anabaptists, these crys & say y^e lords prayer: forgive us our debts & trespasses as we forgive y^m y^t trespass against us, & then like a company of senseless men without understandinge faileth afeighting one with another about there trespasses & debts & never minds what they prayed.”²

Fox appeals to “that of God” within every human being as that which alone can give real communion of spirit. He swoops down uncompromisingly on all “mountains of earth” and all “notions,” on all half-truths and seeming truths, wrapped up in conventional forms of piety. “I was glad,” he says, “that I was commanded to turn people to that inward Light, Spirit and grace, by which all might know their salvation and their way to God – even that Divine Spirit which would lead them into all truth, and which I infallibly knew would never deceive any.”³ “The Light of Christ in man was the way to Christ.”⁴

Not until the time of the execution of the king, in 1649, did Fox begin to speak publicly. He did not wish to found a new sect, but to proclaim a new religious epoch: “The Quakers are not a sect, but are in ye power of god before sects was.” . . . “To all that would know the Way to the Kingdom: whether they be in Forms, without Forms, or got above all Forms.” His mission had a negative aspect which turned him into aggressor, iconoclast, and warrior. “This word is a hammer, beating downe everything y^t ye seed of God may arrise upp. . . . It is as a fyre burning up all corruptions.”⁵

¹ *Journal*, i. 331. ² *Ibid.*, i. 333. ³ Quoted from Braithwaite, p. 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵ *Journal*, i. 73.

To what extent the desire to attack was part of the youthfulness – “*der männliche Protest*” – or belonged to the discovery of the seer, is a problem which I will not discuss further at present. It certainly seemed as if his ardour for first-hand knowledge was to sweep away from the world all mediating authorities, all cheap reproductions of the “Light of the World.” He laid down the law to all those who made personal profit out of the words spoken by Christ and His apostles. The new religious experience went forward like a whirlwind, damaging or invigorating, calling forth wrath and persecution no less than joy and acclamation. In words which strongly remind one of a passage in Birgitta’s¹ revelations, Fox spoke of the world as a wilderness full of thickets and thorns. When he brought the words of life into it, the world reverberated with noise.

Fox’s followers affirm that they “found the powerful life of God break through (them) with such unspeakable love,” that they were “willing to leave all and walk with God.”² Existence became enlarged, enriched, and full of danger. Imprisonment, flogging, lynching, and death were the order of the day. The religious campaign of the Friends was as perilous and exciting as the Civil War had ever been. “The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us, and catch us all, as in a net and His heavenly power at one time drew many hundreds to land, that we came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in, and the Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement, and great admiration.”³

On the one hand, the new experience broke through all the old limitations of a man; on the

¹The Swedish Saint who founded the order of the Bridgittines –Translator’s note.

²*Evesham Friends*, p. 29.

³Braithwaite, p. 95.

other, it could only be given to each one according to his particular measure. The former point of view was more strongly emphasised by Fox in the early years after his conversion. "They asked mee if I were the sonne of God; I said yes: They asked mee if I had seen God's face, I said yes."¹ In such a manner Fox relates part of the law court proceedings at Carlisle, where "he was committed to prison as a Blasphemer, an Heretick and Seducer."

Quite early, however, he pointed out that every being has its definite measure, which cannot without danger be surpassed. "Keep ye in your Habitations, ye Sons of God. . . . And ye Daughters, to whom it is given to Prophetie, keep within your own Measure . . . answering that of God in all."² "And take heed of judging the Measures of others, but every one mind your own."³ "Hee that beeleeves in the light makes not haste."⁴

The religious revival of which Fox was the focus meant, above all, moral sincerity. A characteristic instance of this is found in the retort of Robert Withers, one of the early followers of Fox, when somebody called out: "You disturb us from hearing the word of God." Withers answered: "Thou never heard the word of god in all thy life; thou art but a sinfull man." "God forgiv us, wee are all sinfull enough."⁵

"*The First Publishers of Truth*" raised their voices against such apathy and resignation to sin, pleading for energy and seeking until each one could hear the word that commands, delivers, and unites. Common religion is often nebulous; the Quakers tried to condense it into a body of living light.

When it was urged that a community without a

¹ *The Short Journal and Itinerary Journals of George Fox*, Cambridge, pp. 32, 33.

² Fox's Ep., No. 35.

³ Ibid., No. 47.

⁴ *Journal*, i. 144.

⁵ "*The First Publishers of Truth*," p. 35.

definitely formulated creed, without churches, clergy, or sacraments, was "civil" and not religious, Fox replied: "If any bow to y^t of God in man, how comes it not to be religious, and yet you say for conscience sake, and not religious, and is not y^t religious y^t bindes ye conscience." It has never been put more clearly that a man's conscience is the central starting-point of personal religion. The only surety of a true religious community is also to follow the dictates of conscience: "Yee are one in that which makes plain ye way of God."

Instead of using religious symbols as reminders, intended to influence the inward man from without, certain reactions are brought out from the inner life to be a ferment in everyday life. In this way the refusal to show respect of person, to take an oath or to fight, became more than anything else tokens of fellowship. Confession was first expressed in an act, which abruptly transferred the proselyte from the shelter of his old community to a life of risk. By manifold roads he was led to seek God in such utter loneliness that he must perforce seek with his whole heart. How easily does the Quaker "thou" invite a kick from society, or the hat-question open the prison doors. The demand for justice concerned society and not only the individual. To witness a wrong was to cry out for redress; "I was sorely exercised in going to their Courts to cry for justice, and in speaking and writing to judges and justices to do justly; and in warning such as kept publick Houses for Entertainment, that they should not let people have more drink than would do them good. . . . In Fairs also, and in Markets, I was made to declare against their deceitful Merchandise, and Cheating and Cozening."¹

There was no commonplace act in life that could

¹ *Journal*, i. 39, bicentenary edition, 1891; 1st edition, p. 25.

not and should not be a service of God, and, being transfigured from within, become sacramental.

From biblical and dogmatic Christianity the Quakers had passed to ethical inwardness. The armour which had encrusted religious feeling and imagination had been forced open, and faith moved into the world of outer reality. "*In earth as it is in heaven.*"

The silent worship to which men and women, equally responsible, forgathered in a truly democratic spirit, without a speaker or a leader, was characteristic of the Quakers: "Ye Lord & Christ Jesus was come to teach his people himselfe & to bringe y^m of all ye worlds ways & teachers . . . & sett uppe ye true teacher [Christ Jesus]." ¹

When F. Howgill, who had belonged to the group of Seekers whose silent meetings must have inspired Fox to use this type of service, tried to explain the difference between his previous religious experience and the fresh impact of Fox's teaching, he found that the Seekers had been too eager to imitate the early apostolic community.

"If you build upon anything or have confidence in anything which stands in time and is on this side eternity and the Being of beings, your foundation will be swept away, and night will come upon you, and all your gathered-in things and taken-on and imitated will all fail you. . . . Why gad abroad? Why trim you yourselves with the saints' words, when you are ignorant of the life? Return, return to Him, that is the first love, and the first-born of every creature, who is the Light of the world. . . . Return home to within. Sweep your house all, the groat is there, the little leaven is there, the grain of mustard-seed you will see which the Kingdom of God is like . . . and here you will see your Teacher

¹ *Journal*, i. 42.

not removed into a corner, but present when you are upon your beds and about your labour, convincing, instructing, leading, correcting, judging, and giving peace to all that love and follow Him.”¹

The immanent God is the God of risk. He does not place an infallible pope in the visible world to give orders in His stead. Those who give up seeking Him daily and hourly lose sight of Him. He has the courage to let His imperfect confessors stray, and learn from dire mistakes to press inwards and discover new commandments. He is farther away from the routine saint who has made the platter clean – on the outside – than He is from the sinner who is what he seems. The birth of personality is no guarantee against one-sidedness, however. It denotes merely the plumb-line of the human quest.

A man is not merely a being who can walk upright. He is also a being with arms. He must find a horizontal line and live in a community. Every community has a tendency to settle down and develop a routine in a horizontal plane. Time after time a lonely soul must step out of the routine and discard it, aiming farther along the depths of the plumb-line. The community of the “Friends” was an attempt to find a synthetic solution of the double demand of personality and of community. It continues to be a peculiar experiment of an all-pervading and free unity. If it had developed consistently, this community would have been built up like an organism possessing different limbs, fitted to serve each other and the world both by their similarity and their dissimilarity, effacing the limits of individual immanence by a transcendent and common experience of God.

One of “The First Publishers of Truth” describes the common worship of the small community in

¹ Quoted from Braithwaite, p. 97.

the following words: "We met together often, and waited upon the Lord in pure silence, from our own words and all men's words, and hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and felt His word in our hearts to burn up and beat down all that was contrary to God; and we obeyed the Light of Christ in us . . . and took up the cross to all earthly glories, crowns and ways, and denied ourselves, our relations and all that stood in the way betwixt us and the Lord. . . . And while waiting upon the Lord in silence, as often we did for many hours together, . . . we received often the pouring down of the Spirit upon us . . . and our hearts were made glad, and our tongues loosed, and our mouths opened, . . . and the glory of the Father was revealed; and then began we to sing praises to the Lord God Almighty and to the Lamb for ever, who had redeemed us to God, and brought us out of the captivity and bondage of the world, and put an end to sin and death, – and all this was by and through and in the Light of Christ within us."¹

¹ Edward Burrough, Epistle to the Reader, prefixed to Fox's *Great Mystery*.

THE YOUNG PROPHET

I lett him & ye poore darke people see y^t there bodyes shoulde bee ye temples of God: & Christ never commanded these temples but had ended y^t temple att Jerusalem. — *Journal*, i. 137.

Mountains of encumbrance, higher than Ætna, had been heaped over that Spirit: but it was a Spirit, and would not lie buried there. Through long days and nights of silent agony, it struggled and wrestled, with a man's force, to be free: how its prison-mountains heaved and swayed tumultuously, as the giant spirit shook them to this hand and that, and emerged into the light of Heaven! — From *Sartor Resartus*, book iii, chap. i.

SUCH a release of "free will" has its volcanic periods when its fire throws large and irregular flames out into the world's gloom, as the prominences leap from the luminous surface of the sun. At these times it is impossible to see the hearth which contains the fire, so intense is its glow. There are also periods of quiescence, when "the eternal flame" shines like a small luminous point on the dark and massive altar, obviously constructed by human hands.

When Nayler met Fox, the holy fire was a flaming beacon. Its messenger hastened through the country, on foot or on horseback, to spread the news. Some thought that Fox was a conjuror who rode through space with unbelievable rapidity and bewitched the people by giving them some strange potion to drink. Others described his ghostly appearance when he, like a whirlwind, entered a church, proclaimed his message, and vanished. Others give us the picture of a broad, strong man in

leather breeches and waistcoat with shining buttons, white hat and long hair, a determined rebel whose voice rang out like the last trumpet-blast, disturbing the peace of the church. "Thy voyce drownes mine, and y^e Courts: I must call for 3 or 4 Cryers to drownd thy voyce, thou hast good lungs,"¹ said a judge on one occasion. All who spoke of Fox, however, testified to his dominating personality, unquestionable sincerity, and fresh originality. "As to man, he was an original, being no man's copy,"² wrote William Penn, who also acknowledged that he had not seen anything human to equal the reverence visible in the face of George Fox as he prayed.

Fox's battle-cry was the first to startle all religious folk as he went forth to attack all forms of Church organisation. He nailed to the doors of "the steeple-houses which the world calls churches" the following challenge:

"God is not worshipped here: this is a temple made with hands: neither is this a Church, for the Church is in God. This building is not in God, neither are you in Him, who meets here."³

Not even the most wonderful Gothic structure could induce Fox to find a monopoly of God's presence in a house of stone with mural paintings; not the most sincere message within the frame of an official calling and duty could reconcile him to the system. His task was to usher in the people to the temple made without hands, to the era foretold by Jesus to the woman of Samaria in St. John's Gospel, when God, who is Spirit, will be "worshipped in spirit and in truth" without the confines of earthly temples.

¹ *Journal*, ii. 58.

² Preface to *Journal*, bicentenary ed.

³ Quoted from Braithwaite, p. 50.

The violent antagonism of Fox to the clergy has to a certain extent the character of a "complex," and cannot be regarded only as opposition on principle. "The black, earthly Spirit of the Priest wounded my Life: And when I heard the Bell toll, to call People together to the Steeplehouse, it struck at my Life: For it was just like a Market-Bell, to gather People together, that the Priest might set forth his Ware to Sale."¹

Unlike his followers, Fox used only spiritual weapons. But his hard denunciations savoured sometimes so much of the earth, that they bear witness to his delight in the fight itself. He was not; like St. Francis, convinced that courtesy is one of the attributes of God, but he was quite sure that it was not in accord with God's character to be a respecter of person or to manifest timidity, conventionalism, and outward piety. "When the Lord sent me forth into the world, He forbad me to put off my hat to any, high or low, and I was required to Thee and Thou all men and women."²

The following account in Fox's *Journal* gives us one of the earliest pictures of the young prophet's visit to a church: And I "sate mee doune in ye steeplehouse till ye preist had donne: and hee tooke a text which was oh Every one y^t thirsteth lett him come freely without money & without price &c. And soe I was moved (of ye Lord God) to say unto him, Come doune thou deceiver for dost thou bid people come freely & take of ye water of life freely: & yett thou takes zool. a yeere off y^m (for preachinge ye Scriptures to y^m): maist not thou blush for shame: did ye prophett Esaiah & Christ doe soe y^t spoake those words & gave y^m foorth freely."³

¹ *Journal*, 1st edition, pp. 25-6, bicentenary ed., i. 41.

² *Ibid.*, bicentenary edition, i. 38.

³ *Journal*, i. 19.

When a youth, who has perceived God with the eyes of his soul and at the same time is ignorant of the common hardships of life, comes forward with an absolute command, people react in various ways. Some see only his ignorance and presumption, others cling to the belief in the necessity of good; others see with a touch of humour the greatness of God and the littleness of men. The rector in Fenny Drayton who had watched Fox grow up and silently submit to the recognised order, viewed Fox with a certain good-natured irony, but he could not help taking him seriously: "George ffox Is come to ye light of ye sun: & now hee thinkes to putt out my starr light. [Butt I sayde Nathaniell give mee thy hande] [then] I tolde him I woulde not Quench ye least measure of God in any much less putt out his starr light."¹

It is as great as it is dangerous to attack institutions and individuals out of love for righteousness and truth, as the only conditions worthy of human nature. One single step away from the path of love, and unconsciously you bear down a precipice into the mud of self-righteousness and quarrelsomeness! It presupposes a tremendous faith which believes that the hunger of men for perfection is their deepest hunger. He who no longer believes unhesitatingly in this hunger within himself and others, dares not speak loudly of shortcomings, for his sympathy with what is weak or his fear of men or his own feeling of inadequacy are more dominating than his ethical demands. The prophets of Israel expressed their message in a strange rhythmic sequence, now stressing moral behests, now great forbearance, as the historic situation demanded. Fox, who had himself spent years in seeking and self-scrutiny before he found what he sought, wanted

¹ *Journal*, i. 153.

to set people moving in his own direction, convinced that they would eventually find for themselves, without his mediation, the same healing and power.

It sometimes happened that the fearless iconoclast received a puzzling answer from the parsons in their steeplehouses. The diary moves us by its account of the aged "Preist Boys" who, like another Simeon, became an ardent disciple of the young preacher and followed him everywhere. "And there came all sorts of professors to it purposely to dispute: & I sate of a hey stacke: & spoake nothings for some houres: for I was to famish y^m for words: & soe ye professors spoake to this olde preist & askt him severall times when I would speake and begin: and hee bid y^m waite & tolde y^m y^t ye people waited upon Christ alonge while before hee spoke. And at last I was moved of ye Lorde to speake & they was all reacht by ye Lords power & worde of life & there was a generall Convincement amongst y^m: & from thence passed along with ye olde preist and severall others."¹ Among these was James Nayler. There was also a young graduate, Thomas Taylor, who afterwards wrote to George Fox: "Blessed be the Lord that did not suffer thee from the beginning to flatter me but [caused thee] to deal faithfully with me in that great business of my soul."²

But Fox was generally met with blows and stripes, stone-throwing and pistol-shots. He seemed strangely unmoved by these attacks, and more than once walked unarmed through a furious crowd. He revealed himself early as a leader of men. Full of robust health of soul and body, he imparted assurance and healing to those who came into contact with him. Hardened by his outdoor life, he brought

¹ *Journal*, i. 28.

² Braithwaite, p. 93.

with him an atmosphere of fresh air. We find him on a hillside in Westmorland keeping thousands of people spellbound for hours on end. "I declared freely & largely Gods eyerlastinge truth & worde of life about 3 houres & there was many olde people y^t . . . thought it a strange thinge to see a man to preach on a hill or mountaine & nott in there church as they caled it soe y^t I was made to open to ye people y^t ye steeplehouse . . . was noe more holyer then y^t mountaine . . . Christ was come whoe ended ye temple & ye preists & ye tyths . . . Christ was not caled ye heade of an olde house."¹

His power of resisting persecution and suffering could not but have its effects. Once a raging mob had beaten him senseless. As he was lying on the damp common outside the village he felt how "Ye power of ye Lord sprange through mee & ye eternall refreshinges refresht mee y^t I stode uppe againe in ye eternall power of God." He then received such a stunning blow across his hand that those around him thought his hand would become useless for ever. "I looket att it in ye love of God & I was in ye love of God to y^m all y^t had persecuted mee. And after a while ye Lords power sprange through mee again & through my hande and arme y^t in a minute I recovered my hande and arme and strength in ye face and sight of y^m all."²

When he was in prison he found among his fellow-prisoners a young girl who was going to be hanged for pilfering. At once he sat down to write a petition to the court, pointing out the absurdity of such a punishment. The court listened to his pleading and the girl was saved.

His "travails," his periods of anguish for the sufferings and wrong conditions in the world,

¹ *Journal*, i. 43, 57.

² *Ibid.*, i. 58.

always resulted in some practical intervention. He wrote to princes, Parliaments, clergymen, and inn-keepers. He proposed improvements and reforms. But there was nothing of meddlesomeness in this. "He that beleeves in the light makes not haste."

As a deliverer Fox wandered from village to village with a fixed aim in view. "And ye people was very loveinge & they woulde have had mee come againe in ye weeke day & preacht amongst y^m: but I directed them to there teacher Christ Jesus & soe passt away."¹ He carried a dangerous bomb of explosives into the heavy-laden world, where "mountains of encumbrance higher than Ætna" had settled on the souls of men. But his weapon was not invented, nor could it be rendered void by human power. He was often placed under lock and key, sometimes because he had interrupted a sermon and must therefore be "a blasphemmer and seducer," sometimes because he was held to be a tramp and vagabond, although his clothing belied it: "I pluckt out my linnen: & shewed him y^t I had noe letters: soe hee saide hee is not a vagrant by his linninge."²

The parents of Fox became anxious. He was no longer allowed to make use of their surety for his future good conduct. He must take the entire responsibility himself. But he was compensated for his hardships: "As I stood among y^e people the glory and life shined over all, and wth it I was crowned, and when the priest had done I spake to him and y^e people the truth and y^e light . . . and it set them in a Hurry and under a rage and some said I was madd, and spoke to my outward Relaçons to tye mee upp, and sett them in a rage but the truth came over all; and I passed away in peace in y^e power of the lord God."³

¹ *Journal*, i. 17.² *Ibid.*, i. 31.³ *Short Journal*, p. 13.

Holmes's engraving from a portrait of Fox painted in 1651 emphasises the ecstatic in him. But there is practically no record of any overwrought action apart from one which was perpetrated immediately after his release from a year's penal servitude. In the early days, Fox spoke chiefly in short, abrupt sentences, like a courier in a foreign country who hastens to deliver his message. It became different when he had a whole group behind him, consisting not so much of fellow-believers as of individuals who had a similar spiritual experience "after the measure of each." Recent investigations have shown how much it meant to Fox that a group of Seekers at Balby, in Yorkshire, a small remnant of a dissolved Baptist congregation, found the answer to their longing in his message. Fox's policy of giving a full and honourable share of the common work to women has, amongst other Quaker customs, undoubtedly been inspired by this group of Seekers, especially one of their women preachers, Elizabeth Hooton. She was the first real friend that Fox met on his missionary journeys, and her experiences coincided largely with his own.

Fox's cleanliness in body and mind, no less than his inward fire, tempered by practical sense and moderation, made his personality magnetically attractive. He was something of a ruler and something of a warrior in spite of his ostentatious refusal to carry arms. It was not merely as a jest that his warders in prison tried to force him into accepting a commission, making this a condition of setting him free. "Butt I tolde y^m I lived in ye . . . life & power y^t tooke away ye occasion off all warrs: & I knew from whence all warrs did rise."¹

Fox was unconscious of the fact that he also put on a theological garb and in all sincerity regarded

¹ *Journal*, i. 11-12.



GEORGE FOX AT THE AGE OF 30

From the engraving by Holmes after Honthorst's picture painted 1654

himself as being one with God. He never wore clerical attire like the steeplehouse parsons, but his daily speech was wrapped in an Eastern cloak, woven by Israel's prophets and poets, truth being its warp and suffering its woof. George Fox was one of the few whose spiritual stature was tall enough to carry that cloak without trailing it in the dust, but also he could occasionally confuse the messenger with the message. Also he succumbed sometimes to a little earthly self-sufficiency and malice when he denounced his enemies, whom he also regarded as God's. He had the imperialist in his blood. "Many such false prophetts has risen against mee but ye Lord has blasted y^m & will blast y^m all whoe rises against ye blessed seede & mee in it."¹ And the ceremonial of the hat became in the end no less important to him than ritual of another kind was to the "steeplehouse" parsons.

One can hardly wonder that the old veteran who had fought against so much opposition, and suffered so long from imprisonment and gout, should not go altogether unharmed from these temptations. They had found no foothold in his youth, when the spiritual fire made his soul like red-hot metal, and he started out into the world to gather in the people and lead them "to ye beginning."

¹ *Journal*, i. 147.

“FROM YE WORD TO YE BEGINNING”

JAMES NAYLER had returned from the Scottish campaign. His powers were low; he had not allowed himself to be invalided home without good reason. Perhaps, like so many of those who came back from the Great War, he continued to live in a sphere of thoughts, memories, and problems, with invisible barriers between himself and his old world. Perhaps he had in some way become detached from the sod he used to plough, and at one with the problems of the whole kingdom – the destitution of the landless and the new possibilities of the rulers.

Indirectly, we may infer that he had been deeply impressed by Winstanley's writings, appealing as they did to the landowners on behalf of the utterly destitute. He was scrupulous as regards all ownership, which Fox, in spite of his practical generosity, never seems to have been. As quarter-master, Nayler had seen the ransacked cottages and farms and the vagabond life of the workless. Hardships which had not come within his own range of experience were set forth in Winstanley's pamphlets, and his own writings often re-echoed their point of view.

The questions of land, marriage, and proprietorship had not affected Fox personally, and were therefore not as real to him as they were to Nayler, whose conscience was haunted by them.

A printed *Declaration of the Grounds and Reasons* for cultivating waste land, written by the inhabitants of Wellingborough, contained the following:

“We are in Wellingborrow in one parish 1169

persons that receive alms, as the Officers have made it appear at the Quarter Sessions last. We have made our case known to the Justices; the Justices have given order that the Town should raise a stock to set us on work, and that the Hundred should be enjoined to assist them. But as yet we see nothing is done, nor any man that goeth about it. We have spent all we have; our trading is decayed; our wives and children cry for bread. . . . Rich men's hearts are hardened; they will not give us if we beg at their doors. If we steal, the Law will end our lives. Divers of the poor are starved to death already; and it were better for us that are living to die by the Sword than by the Famine. And now we consider that the Earth is our Mother; and that God hath given it to the children of men; and that the Common and Waste Grounds belong to the poor. . . . Therefore we have begun to bestow our righteous labor upon it, and we shall trust the Spirit for a blessing upon our labor, resolving not to dig up any man's propriety until they freely give us it."¹

A landowner who continually saw and heard such things, must necessarily have been more interested in these problems than one who had never owned land. We may form some idea of the bitterness of Nayler's thoughts during this time from sayings in his later writings, which vibrate with the passion of experienced wrongs. "Who could have believed that *England* would have brought forth no better Fruits than these, now after such Deliverance, as no Nation else can witness."² Here bitterness is almost outweighed by pride. But he goes on to say in his Lamentation: "O *England*! How is thy Expectation failed, now after all thy Travels."³

¹ Quoted from L. H. Behrens: *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth*, p. 151.

² *Works*, p. 171.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

“Awake, awake, all sorts of people.”¹ “O you people of *England*! How long will it be e’er you be obedient to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? How long will you profess him in Words and Forms, and yet will not own him in Power? You can be content to let him have the Name of a King, so that you yourselves may reign, and under the Name of Christ’s Kingdom, act your own Wills.”²

“And you that are in Power,” he writes to Cromwell, “mind the Promise of the Father, at the Coming of Christ to his Kingdom, *I will overturn, overturn, overturn*, till it come into his Hand whose Right it is, and upon his Shoulders shall the Government be established. . . . And take Notice how many have been overturned already, who would have been limitting him by their Wisdoms. And now it is come into your Hands, who above all have seen his Wonders done for you and the Nation, and you above all have declared, that your Desire is, *That Christ alone may reign in his Kingdom*. . . . But if you forget your selves, and what you have promised before the Lord, in the Day when you sought unto Him for Deliverance . . . he will overturn you, and raise up his Kingdom another way . . . for the Almighty God hath been shaking the Nations, that his Glory may appear; and there shall be no Rest, until his Kingdom be established above all Mountains. Hear all ye Powers of the Earth, the Lord alone will reign.”³

The political horizon which had expanded Nayler’s world during the Civil War remained with him, and was one with his view of life. His ideas, and his faith in the possibility of realising them, began to wilt like “withered plants” pulled out of the soil. Nayler felt like “vomiting” up the big words from the past. He believed no longer in words. As

¹ *Works*, p. 171.

² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 51–2.

one bewitched, he went about his business in sorrow, ill-health, and disappointment. His cough, which often troubled him in years to come, sounded perhaps more hollow than ever while he went about ploughing his fields in impotence.

He had several friends and fellow-soldiers in the neighbourhood. There was a Lieutenant Roper, who was "nearly a Quaker." Another soldier friend was William Dewsbury, who, after a long and eager search, had found "the Inner Light." Richard Farnsworth and the brothers Killam belonged to a small group which held meetings at Balby, near Doncaster. Like Nayler, this group showed kinship with Winstanley's ideas before he became absorbed in the question of agrarian reform. When Fox came to Balby, everything was prepared for the fire to be kindled, and what is looked upon as the first Quaker meeting was held there. This little group besought Fox to visit the neighbourhood where Roper and Nayler lived. They seem to have been fast friends, and their farms lay quite near each other. It is possible that meetings were held at Roper's house also after the departure of Fox.

Years afterwards, when anything that might be disparaging in Nayler's earlier life was unearthed, a witness gave the information that Mrs. Roper, "in the presence of several people," kissed James Nayler. It is typical that the accusation does not consist in what Nayler himself did, but what was done to him. "It might be she kissed me,"¹ he answered before Parliament. "It was our manner; but when I found their extravagancies I left them. All that knew me, in the army and elsewhere, will say I was never guilty of lewdness; or so reputed. I abhor filthiness. See if any can accuse."² Nayler came to Roper's home to meet Fox. So did William

¹ Cf. *Short Journal*, p. 15.

² Burton's *Diary* i. 46.

Dewsbury and his wife, Anne. Nayler's wife, however, is not mentioned in this connection. About the time when Nayler met Fox, according to Sewel, early in 1652, James Nayler had an experience of paramount importance to his future life. He was alone in the open, "in Barley-seed time." He was tired of all talking and vain words. But that which the words had endeavoured to reach now came to him as an inward reality. What he had tried to live himself into, now lived within him. "I was at the Plow, meditating on the things of God, and suddenly I heard a Voice, saying unto me, Get Thee out from thy kindred, and from thy Father's House. And I had a Promise given in with it. Whereupon I did exceedingly rejoyce, that I had heard the Voice of that God which I had possessed from a Child, but had never known him. . . . And when I came Home, I gave up my Estate, cast out my money; but not being obedient in going forth, the Wrath of God was upon me."¹

Who received the possessions? "My wife and children," says Nayler. "I had thought in imitation of the Pharisees he had boasted of some deeds of charity,"² wrote later on one of his assailants.

When Dewsbury, like Nayler, went out into the world with the liberating message, *his* wife was whole-heartedly with him. She took afterwards actual part in the work, and their letters, still extant, speak of a happy partnership in the great task. When Dewsbury was accused of deserting his wife, he answered: "I do her no wrong at all, in that I freely give her the same liberty I take myself."³

Nayler, who stood alone in his compelling experience, was obliged to provide for his wife and children. He heard from time to time how things

¹ *Works*, p. 12. ² Deacon: *An Exact History of the Life of James Nayler*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

were going with them. But these messages give no ground whatever for supposing that he received financial assistance from home, although his wife would probably have been more than ready to help him.

I cannot refrain from thinking that, like the Franciscans and the Lollards, Nayler found the problem of worldly possessions far more imperative than Fox did. On the other hand, I have not come across any instance where Nayler in his writings suggests a theoretic solution, as did Winstanley. As regards the agrarian question, Nayler's point of view was a medley of antiquated mediæval conceptions and dawning modern ideals, evincing practical experience as well as an obvious absence of a general theory. For his own part, he chose the way of renunciation. He found it comparatively easy to give up the property, but hard to leave home. His personality revolted against the inner command in this respect.

He had renounced all for the "Kingdom" when he joined the army in 1642. Should he not be equally willing to sacrifice all for this new kingdom? Was not a transformation of human nature the only way to the kingdom? His suffering at the thought of leaving wife and children seemed unconquerable. Nayler did not find it easy to deny himself for Christ's sake all that was dearest to him in this world.

During this period of doubt, Nayler's health grew steadily worse. He went about as one condemned to death. "Not being obedient in going forth the Wrath of God was upon me, so that I was made a Wonder to all, and none thought that I would have lived."¹

Something, however, must have happened to make him willing. Was it that he met Fox that evening at the house of Lieutenant Roper? William

¹ *Works*, p. 12.

and Anne Dewsbury had gone to Fox after his meeting and walked with him afterwards in the moonlight night, finding with him “Unity in the Truth.” But Nayler was not there.

He himself says only: “After I was made willing I began to make some Preparation, as Apparel and other Necessaries, not knowing whither I should go: but shortly afterward, going a gate-ward with a Friend from my own House, having an Old Suit without any money, having neither taken Leave of Wife or Children, not thinking then of any journey, I was commanded to go to the West, not knowing whether I should go, nor what I was to do there: but when I had been there a little while, I had given me what I was to declare; and ever since I have remained not knowing to Day what I was to do to morrow.”¹

As long as he, in his old way, had believed in a distant Christ who long ago died in Jerusalem, the Bible had been his only guide in his search for God. Also the revolutionary politicians had concentrated their efforts on obtaining a constitution “according to the Scripture.” Nayler’s eyes were opened by this new experience, and the Word was made Life. “This is not a Notion of what was done in another Generation, past or to come, Hundreds or Thousands of Years distance, but that which leads to . . . a New Birth spiritually begotten, and born and brought to light, without which none can see the Kingdom of God, nor enter therein . . . his Mighty Working in me, in which the Soul is raised out of the Grave.”² It was direct religious inspiration, borrowing the voice of ancient patriarchs and prophets.

Nayler himself did not mention Fox when he gave an account of what happened to himself. “For this

¹ *Works*, pp. 12, 13.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 429–30.

is Joy indeed, and Love unspeakable, when the Soul finds that Treasure in his own House freely given, which he hath long been seeking abroad, and could never purchase, neither with Life nor Estate."¹ It was probably due to Fox that the spiritual command led on to fresh work and not only to self-surrender. Nayler did not theoretically solve the problems relating to either land, possessions, or family. He cut the knots and freed himself from all encumbrances. He ventured his life for that which his reason could not solve, as he had done once before.

James Nayler was again in the thick of the fight, this time in the cause which he called "The Lamb's War against the Man of Sin."

¹ *Works*, p. 369.

BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

WHOLE bands of people made the inner discovery that Fox had brought to light. They emerged from their narrow surroundings as a butterfly from its chrysalis, filled to overflowing with new enterprise among their fellow-men. It is necessary to bear the whole movement in mind in order to get the right perspective, above all when the chief interest, as in this book, is focused in a single individual.

"Amongst the many that bore a testimony for the Kingly Power of the Lord Jesus in the Hearts of Mankind . . . was this James Nailer."¹

James Nayler had seen how continuous discussions may "murder" true inspiration. He knew now that "as great as is a man's faith, so great is his liberty."²

Weary to death of all the planning which had led to nothing, he threw himself at last, with a joyful cry of liberation, into the uncertain and yet safe life which he had read about in the Gospels, but now experienced as an inspiration. His life now held a meaning, and he became physically stronger. "In the most brutish parts of the nation, where none knew" him, he wandered in obedience to the inner voice, as did once the apostles and the Grey Friars, "without Bag or Scrip or Money." "Yet," he says, "I wanted nothing."³

While Nayler was preaching to the lonely people on moors and fells, being kindly received, Fox came to the "steeplehouse" at Woodchurch where Nayler was wont to sit with his wife and relatives listening

¹ *Memoirs*, p. x.

² *Works*, "A Salutation."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

to the sermon. The minister, Mr. Marshall, was well liked in his parish, and he could not account for Nayler's disappearance otherwise than that Fox had bewitched him. There was great commotion in Woodchurch that Sunday. At the close of the sermon, Fox stood up in the congregation and began, according to his own words, "to declare ye worde of life to him."¹ But at this outburst the whole parish turned against him. "Y^e People thrust mee out of y^e doore and chancery and haled and pulled mee upp and down and cryed for y^e stocks and threatned mee w^h them, and this was y^e greatest professor in yorkshire, but y^e truth came over all."²

They did not put Fox in the pillory, but the unpleasant scene, in addition to Nayler's sudden departure, brought the feelings of the little community to boiling-point. Everybody thought that the new movement caused a worse disturbance even than the army had done when it marched through the neighbourhood. The congregation united in expelling Nayler from their communion – news which was not disclosed to Nayler until long afterwards. His family must have felt all this very keenly. Anne Nayler did not go to the Ropers and did not join the new movement. But she must have possessed unusual strength of character. Without bitterness or complaint she seems to have given her husband his full freedom.

James Nayler stated positively that he had never interrupted the morning service. His behaviour differed in many respects from that of Fox. He did not speak in the churches, and he addressed his opponents in a more courteous and less authoritative manner, although he too could sometimes use vigorous denunciations.

¹ *Journal*, i. 37.

² *Short Journal*, p. 9.

During one of Nayler's earliest journeys in the North of England, Richard Farnsworth was his companion, "a man of great abilities, and parts and knowledge, and accounted of among men, even excelling many of his equals." He was a cripple, but had received a good schooling, and, at the age of sixteen, he became an ardent student of the Bible. His belief was orthodox and uncompromising and his attitude towards others highly intolerant. He also was driven into the ranks of the Seekers, and found eventually the same "Inner Light" which illumined the way of Fox.

Nayler and Farnsworth were well received by the people, who often provided a room for their meetings. But they spoke also in the open air. Men and women and, above all, old soldiers walked long distances in the summer evenings to hear Nayler. At some meetings "stones flew as fast as bullets in a battle," so great was the antagonism. He visited his home at intervals, and his brother William joined the movement.

Nayler kept up a frequent correspondence with others among "the First Publishers of Truth." While at home he received a letter from Farnsworth, who sent messages to Lieutenant Roper, William Dewsbury, and others in their circle of friends. On the outside of the folded letter one can still read in faded ink: "ffor my deare friend James Nayler at his home at Wakefield Woodside" – an address that in those days did not often find James. Farnsworth often spoke of "my dear brethren George and James." "Deare brother I much desire to see thee, but dare not make my way till my father please," wrote Nayler to Fox.¹

Nayler met Fox again at a dramatic moment late in the summer of 1652, at Swarthmore Hall, in

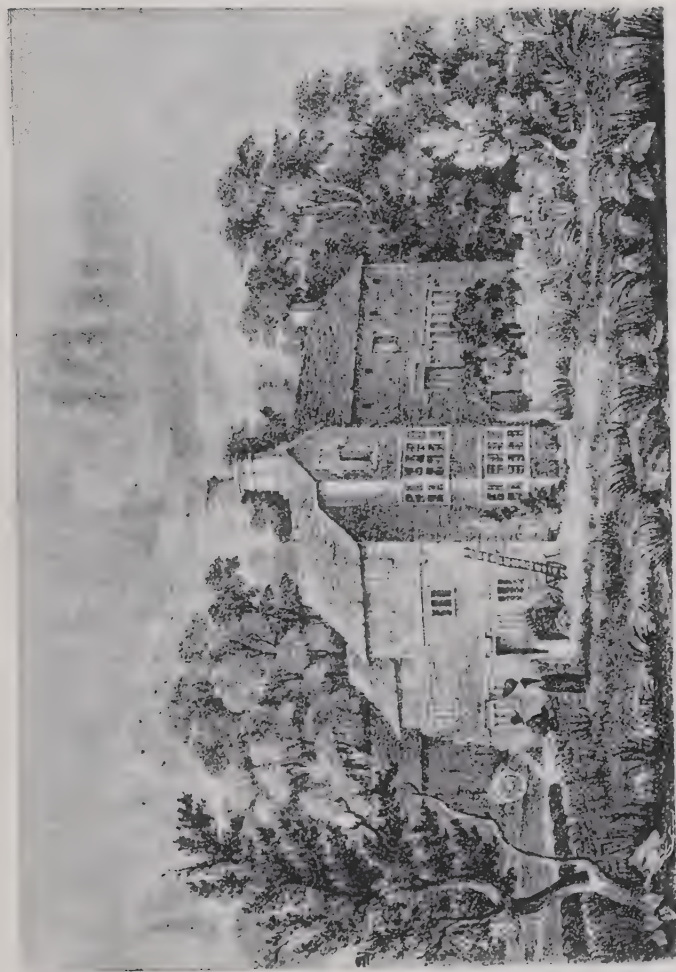
¹ Swm. MSS., iii. 61.

Lancashire, the home of Judge Fell and his wife. They kept an open house, inviting preachers of different religious outlook to speak there, a broad-mindedness shared by Mr. Lampitt, curate of the parish. Fox was brought to the Hall in the absence of the host and hostess. On her return, Margaret Fell found Fox engaged in heated argument with Lampitt: Fox did not respond to Lampitt's tolerant attitude towards other believers, but found "his Spiritt and his stuffe . . . foule." He held that Lampitt had not experienced what he was talking about, and that his point of view was that of a Ranter. Lampitt suggested that Fox should come and hear him preach the next day at Ulverston Church. In the end Fox went.

When the opening hymn had been sung, Fox "stood up . . . and desired that he might have liberty to speak, and he that was in the pulpit said he might. . . . And then he went on, and opened the scriptures . . . and said, 'Then what had any to do with the scriptures but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth? You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this, but what canst thou say? Art thou a Child of Light, and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?' This opened me so, that it cut me to the heart, and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat me down in my pew again, and cried bitterly: . . . 'We are all thieves, we have taken the scriptures in words, and know nothing of them ourselves.'"¹

When Judge Fell was on his way home a few days later, he was met "by a party of captains and magistrates" who had come to warn him of the havoc wrought by the Quakers during his absence; how they had bewitched his wife and daughters and

¹ From Margaret Fell's own account. See Braithwaite, p. 101.



SWARTHMORE HALL, NEAR ULVERSTON, LANC'S
From an old lithograph

turned them from their faith. They advised the Judge to make arrangements for the immediate expulsion of the invaders.

When the Judge, in great wrath, came home to set things in order, Fox was out, but he met instead Nayler and Farnsworth. Nayler, the former officer, disarmed the Judge's bad temper and succeeded in persuading him to consider before he acted. Judge Fell promised to listen to what Fox had to say when he returned in the evening. The Judge retained his good opinion of Nayler, and in letters to and from Margaret Fell there are frequent exchanges of greeting between the two. In the evening Fox expounded his experience in contradistinction to the notions of Lampitt with such convincing lucidity that from that day Judge Fell was sympathetic to the Quakers, without actually joining the movement, and Swarthmore Hall became the centre of the early Friends. The influence of Margaret Fell's practical devotion to the Quaker cause can hardly be over-estimated. She was a uniting force, linking up the scattered members of the Society with each other and with Swarthmore Hall.

For some time to come it would have been dangerous for the Quakers to preach openly in that neighbourhood. They met with stripes and blows, and the good mistress of Swarthmore Hall bandaged up many bruised heads and arms. One day Fox and Nayler visited Walney Island, a small fishing-village in Lampitt's parish. They were met by pistol-shots, and some forty fishermen rushed on Fox and wanted to throw him into the sea. He was beaten senseless, and when he regained consciousness the stones were still flying round him, one of the fishermen trying to shelter him with his own body from the angry crowd. The same man afterwards rowed Fox into safety and returned eventually to see what had

happened to Nayler. "They never minded him till I was gone," wrote Fox long afterwards, "& . . . they fell upon him & all there cry was kill him kill him."¹ As an old veteran, Nayler must have found it hard not to resort to force while the mob was yelling, but it would have been unthinkable to "a Soldier of the Lamb" to hit back.

In the end the two friends arrived safely at Swarthmore. Shortly afterwards they were both charged with blasphemy at the Lancaster Assizes. This time they were not found guilty, but the clergy in the neighbourhood sent a petition to the Government, with a large number of indictments, asking for the speedy suppression of the dangerous Quakers.

¹ *Journal*, i. 60.

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF AN EYE-WITNESS

AN eye-witness has described one of the earliest encounters between the Quakers and the authorities:¹

“James Nayler being raised up, and sent forth to declare the everlasting Truth, came to Westmorland, and being at a Meeting at Edward Brigg’s House on the First Day, where many People met, he was desired by divers Friends, to meet the Day following at Widow Cock’s House, about a mile from Kendal; whereof the Priests having Notice, raised the Town of Kendal against him. . . .

“After much Jangling, the Priest began to accuse him before the Justice and Magistrates of many things: as that he taught People to burn their Bibles; Children to disobey their Parents; Wives their Husbands; People to disobey the Magistrates, and such like Accusations: to which James answered, Thou art a false Accuser: Prove one of these things, if thou canst, here, before the Magistrates. But not being able to prove any one, he began to accuse James, for Holding out a Light that doth convince of Sin; which, said the Priest, all have not. To which James said, Put out one in all this great Multitude, that dare say he hath it not; Saith the Priest, These are all Christians, but if a Turk or Indian were here, he would deny it. James said, Thou goest far for a Proof, but if a Turk were here he would witness against thee.

“The People beginning to fight, the Priest turned

¹ The following account is taken from Whitehead’s introduction to Nayler’s *Works*, and is almost identical with that given in *Memoirs*.—Translator’s note.

away, saying, Here will be a Disturbance. Said James, These are thy Christians, and this is the Fruits of thy Ministry: But the Justice, with some others, did endeavour to keep the rude People off him, so that they could not come to their Purpose there; but he being to pass over the Bridge, and through the Town, they that were of the Priests Party ran before, swearing they would throw him off the Bridge into the Water: but coming thither, and seeing their Purpose, he was encouraged in his God, who gave him Assurance of Protection, and did wonderfully keep him, and those that were with him: for when he came to the Bridge, the Word of the Lord came unto him, and he was made to cry out against their Rage, and the Power of the Lord was with him, so that he received no Harm, though he was made to speak all a-long, and in the Market-Place, and till he came out of the Town: but the raging Priests continued Shouting, Crying, and some Throwing of Stones at him a Quarter of a Mile out of the Town. But such was the Power of the Lord, that neither he, nor any with him, received any Harm. The Work was wonderful, and we were brought much to admire it, and praise the Lord, who is blessed for ever and ever.

“Another time, James being desired of many Christian Friends, to be at a meeting at Orton, there to wait upon the Lord for what he would make known to his People, went accordingly; and many Friends and Brethren accompanied him: but the Priests having Intelligence some Days before, five of them were gathered together, and many People from all Quarters. A Friend in the Town desired James to come to his House. . . . A Message was sent from the Priests, desiring him to come into the Field, under Pretence of a more convenient Place for the great Multitude. To which James answered,

It is my Desire that all may be edified: And coming into the Field, the Priests came with a great Multitude, and asked him, By what Authority he came thither, and had gathered together so many People, to break the Peace? And tempting him, said, Wilt thou be bound, that none here shall break the Peace? To which James answered, We came not hither to create Offences: but if any break the Law, let him suffer by the Law. For he perceived they intended Violence, as it appeared afterwards.

“But seeing they could not prevail in that, another of them desired him to go into Church, as he called it; tempting him, saying, The People may all sit, and hear better. But James perceiving their deceit, said, All Places were alike to him, he would abide in the Field; whereupon they pulled out an Ordinance of Parliament forbidding any to speak, but such as were authorised to speak, either in Church or Chappel, or any publick Place; and bad him speak at his Peril, as he would answer the Contempt of it. To which he answered, saying, This is not a publick Place. No, said one of the Priests, Is not this a publick Place, the Town Field! And charged the Constable of the Town to do his Office; and examined his Authority. James answered, Those that are sent to declare the Things of God, have not their Authority from Men. But they bid him prove that. He said, Paul received not his Commission from Man, nor by Man. To which one of them answered, That was his Gospel: but they would prove, That Paul had a Call from Man to preach; and for that End he named that Place in Acts 13. 2. where the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul: and the Apostles laid their Hands upon them: Which, said one of them, was the Laying on of Hands of the Presbytery. But when he had found that Place, James asked him, if that was Paul’s Call

to the Ministry? (three times) but he answered nothing: then said James, If that was his Call, he had preached long without a Call before that; and instanced to prove it, Gal. i.

“Whereupon that Business ended: But another Priest stood up, and said, thou oughtest to give an Account of thy Faith to every one that asketh: whereupon he asked divers Questions, whereunto James answered, insomuch that some who stood by cried out, Answer not at all, but ask him some. A While after James asked him, How he would prove himself a Minister of the Gospel, and live upon Tythes; to which he would not answer: then said James, Neither will I answer thee, if thou ask me Twenty more.

“The next Question he asked was, Whether Christ was ascended or no? but James said, I will not answer thee; whereupon he cried out to the People, and said, He denies the Humanity of Christ: And made a great Outcry among the People of it. But the People cried out, saying, Let us hear him; you have often told us many things against him: Let him speak, and then if he speak not Truth, you may then reprove him. James hearing the Desire of the People, began to speak; and the People gave Audience, and were very silent. But beginning to hold out Christ alone to be the Teacher of his People in Spirit and Truth, one of the Priests cried out, I cannot endure to hear this Seducer any longer. Upon which James said, Prove me a Seducer before all this People, or else thou art a False Accuser. But he had not one Word to say against any thing that he had spoken; but said, If thou wilt not answer me that Question I asked thee, I will call thee a Seducer as long as I live.

“Whereupon, seeing there could be no Peace there, nor Liberty to speak, they desired James to

go into the House: and they kept close about him, to keep him from the Violence of some that came along with the Priest: but they raged so, that he and some other Friends received Blows, and with much ado got to the House: but they, like the raging Sodomites waited about the Door to do Mischief, and kept shouting about the House all the while he was speaking: but the House being filled with People they could not come to their Purpose. And the Lord so ordered it, in the Evening we came away without any more Harm: but not long after, there came some of the Priests Party about the House, and asked, if Nayler was gone? And when they heard he was gone, they said, He may thank God for that. Thus by the Wisdom of God he escaped their Violence at that time.

“But the Priests missing of their Purpose there, the next first Day after, they prepared their Sermons suitable to what they intended, possessing the People that he was a Blasphemer, and denied the Resurrection and Humanity of Christ, and all Authority; and that the Parliament had opened a Gap for Blasphemy, and, as it was said by some of their Hearers, they did God good Service that would knock him down. Thus having stirred up the ruder sort, the next Day they prevailed with one called a Justice of Peace, the Priest’s Son got him to come twelve Miles from his own House, (he was one that had been in actual Arms against the Parliament, for the bringing in of the Scots) and having armed a great Multitude against the next Morning, they came very early to the House where he was, where many Christian Friends should have met that Day, and asked for Nayler, threatening to knock out his Brains against the Stones in the Wall, and that they would pull down the House if he would not come out; though the Door was never

shut against them. But some of them came into the House, and commanded him to come forth, under pretence to dispute with the Priest. But James seeing what they intended, answered, You did not use me so civilly the last time I was amongst you, but if any have a Mind, they may come in, the Doors are open. Which answer they told the Priests; whereupon they rushed violently in, and taking him by the Throat, haled him out of the Door into the Field, (where was a Man whom they called a Justice) and with a Pitchfork struck off his Hat, and commanded him to answer to such Questions as the Priests would ask him. Whereupon the Priest began to ask many Questions; as concerning the Resurrection, the Humanity of Christ, the Scriptures, and divers other Questions, as, the Sacrament, and such like; to which he answered, and proved by Scripture. But at last being asked if Christ was in him, he said, He witnesseth him in a Measure. The Priest asked, If Christ was in him as Man? James said, Christ is not divided. But he urged him to tell, whether Christ as Man was in him or no? He answered, Christ is not divided; for if he be, he is no more Christ: but I witness that Christ in me (who is God and Man) in Measure. But the Priest said, Christ is in Heaven with a carnal Body. To which said James, Christ filleth Heaven and Earth, and is not carnal, but spiritual: for if Christ be in Heaven with a carnal Body, and the Saints with a spiritual Body, that is not proportionable (or agreeable) neither was that a carnal Body which came in among the Disciples, the Doors being shut: for Christ is a Mystery, and thou knowest him not. . . .

“Then the Priest turned away from him; upon which, the armed Multitude began to be violent against divers Friends that were there. James hearing

Friends cry out, said to the Justice, You will surely let us peaceably in the House again: but seeing him to go away, and leave them in the Hands of the rude Multitude, he gave himself up, saying, The Will of the Lord be done.

“Upon which the Justice turned again, saying, We will see him in the House again; and going towards the House, many Friends kept close about James, exposing their own Bodies to the Danger of their Weapons, to save him harmless: And so with much ado we got into the House, not receiving much Harm. Which being done and as James was praising the Lord, for his wonderous Deliverance from their malicious Intents, some heard them say, If we let him go thus, all People will run after him. Whereupon they agreed that he should be brought before the Justice again, and come with Violence, and haled him out again. Then the Justice and the Priest getting on Horseback, they caused him to run after them to an Alehouse on the other Side the Water, where they went in, not suffering one Friend to go in with James. And when he came before the Justice, he told him, If he would not put off his Hat, he would send him to Prison; and also because he Thou’d him; for the Justice said, My Commission runs Ye. To which James answered, I do it not in Contempt; for I own Authority, and honour it according to the Scriptures: but I find none such Honour commanded in Scripture, but forbidden. Then they concluded to commit him for that, and also as a Wandering Person, and said, None there knew from whence he came; for those who knew him were kept out. Then said he to Arthur Scaife, Thou knowest me; I was in the Army with thee eight or nine Years. It is no matter, said the Justice, Thou art no Soldier now.

“Then they writ a Mittimus to send him to Prison,

and carried him to Kirby-Steven that Night, and shut him up in a Chamber, and set a Guard upon him: but divers of our Friends following into the Town. . . . But Friends not being suffered to go into the House where James was, they abode in the Streets; and some of them being moved to speak to the People, the Priests perceiving the People to give Audience to what was spoken, made Complaint: Whereupon some were sent forth, and with Violence fetched in Francis Howgill, a Friend who was speaking to the People, and brought him into the Priests Hall. . . . Upon that he was sent to Prison; a Guard of Eight men was set over them. . . . The next Day they (Nayler and Howgill) were guarded to Appleby."

A TRIAL

It was important for Nayler's accusers to collect as much information as possible about the prisoner. His excommunication was a serious indictment, and all that gossip and malice could ferret out was made use of, including Mrs. Roper's kiss. How much this must have wounded Nayler, especially on account of his family, we may guess from his letters to Fox, written in prison: "Nothing apeareas but trobles and plotts and inventing mischeife against me, among my enemies in these parts, false witnes increase dayly, but I am maid to looke beyond all man & there I find comfort."¹

At that time Nayler's wife came forward. She travelled to the assizes and cleared her husband before the Judge. Nayler wrote to Fox about it:

"The comeinge over of my wife was verie Servisable and hath Stoped many mouths, and hath convinced them of many lies they had raysed. . . . And I myselfe had great refreshment of her comeinge for she came and returned, with much freedome and great joy, beyond what I in reason could expect, but I se she was sent of my father and fitted by him not to be in ye least a hinderer but a fartherer of his works."²

Nayler's wife seemed to relieve him of a perhaps semi-conscious feeling of guilt towards his family. And her generous love "beyond what I in reason could expect" liberates a great joy within him.

"Dear hearts, you make your own troubles of being unwilling and disobedient to that which would

¹ Swm. MSS., iii. 69.

² Ibid., ii. 847.

lead you safe. There is no way but to go hand in hand with Him in all things, running after Him without fear or considering, leaving the whole work only to Him. If He seem to smile, follow Him in fear and love, and, if He seem to frown, follow Him and fall into His will, and you shall see that He is yours still, – for He will prove His own.”¹

Nayler’s fellow-prisoner, Francis Howgill, was of the same age as he, and had passed through a period of strict puritanical piety. After this he joined the Seekers, and was one of their leading forces in Westmorland. Fox’s message led him through a period of intense fight against his own sinfulness to understand “that the Light of Christ in man was the way to Christ.” With great energy he threw his life into the movement.

A long time passed before the two prisoners were tried. As much material as possible was to be collected. In January 1653, however, Nayler was brought up for trial. He had been told that the authorities were already convinced of his guilt. The Blasphemy Act of 1650 ordered six months’ imprisonment for the assertion that the Eternal Majesty has His dwelling in the living and nowhere else. For the second offence the punishment was exile, and for the third, hanging.

One of the justices, Gervase Benson, was a Quaker, however. Another, Anthony Pearson, who chiefly led the examination, was so deeply impressed by the answers and personalities of the prisoners that a living interest in the message of the Friends was aroused in him, and he wrote a preface to one of Nayler’s pamphlets.

It is interesting to compare Fox’s way of answering similar accusations with Nayler’s line of defence. Fox does not attempt to explain or excuse. He cuts

¹ From a letter to Fox, quoted from Braithwaite, p. 112.

off, and lays down in brief, impressive, uncompromising, and deliberate statements. Nayler, on the other hand, gives reasons, and takes the opposing point of view into account, although he himself stands firm.

The preamble consisted generally in arguments about the hat, that mischief-maker which became a kind of orthodox public confession of democracy or brotherhood.

The following extracts of the trial are found in Nayler's *Works*:

"Justice Pearson: – Put off your Hats.

"J. Nayler: – I do it not in Contempt of Authority; for I honour the Power as it is of God, without Respecting Mens Persons, it being forbidden in Scripture. . . .

"Just.: – That is meant of Respecting Persons in Judgment.

"J. N.: – If I see one in goodly Apparel, and a Gold Ring, and see one in poor and vile Rayment, and say to him in fine Apparel, Sit thou in a higher Place than the Poor, I am partial, and judged of Evil Thoughts.

"Col. Brigs: – If thou wert in the Parliament House, wouldst thou keep it on?

"J. N.: – If God should keep me in the same Mind I am now, I should.

"Col. Brigs: – I knew thou wouldst contemn Authority.

"J. N.: – I speak in the Presence of God, I do not contemn Authority; but I am subject to the Power as it is of God, for Conscience sake.

"Just. Pears.: – Now Authority commands thee to put off thy Hat, what sayst thou to it?

"J. N.: – Where God commands one thing, and Man another, I am to obey God rather than Man.

“Col. Benson: – See whether the Law commands it, or your own wills.

“The Indictment was read, wherein James was indicted for saying, that Christ was in him, and that there was but One Word of God.” It is this point which nearly all indictments, debates, and imprisonments lay hold of.

Nayler answered further questions as to his circumstances, and gave an account of his conversion, which has been quoted above from Nayler’s own words at this trial.

“Justice Pearson: – Is Christ in thee?

“J. N.: – I witness him in me: and if I should deny him before Men, he would deny me before my Father which is in Heaven.

“Just. Pearson: – Spiritual, you mean?

“J. N.: – Yea, Spiritual. . . .

“Just. Pears.: – What difference then between the ministers and you?

“J. N.: – The Ministers affirm Christ to be in Heaven with a carnal Body, but I with a spiritual.

“Just. Pearson: – Which of the Ministers say, Christ is in Heaven with a carnal Body?” . . .

Priest Higginson stood up, and affirmed it again openly, before all the court. “James perceiving Priest Higginson offended, because he had told of his Saying, that Christ was in Heaven with a carnal Body, James said, Friend, I had not accused thee, had I not been asked what was the Difference between the Ministers and me. For I am not come to accuse any; for I am against Accusations. . . .

“Col. Brigs: – Didst not thou write a Paper, wherein was mentioned, That if thou thinkest to be saved by that Christ which died at Jerusalem, thou art deceived.

“J. N.: – If I cannot witness Christ nearer than Jerusalem, I shall have no Benefit by him; but

I own no other Christ but that who witnessed a good Confession before Pontius Pilate; which Christ I witness suffering in me now (viz. spiritually).”

The inner Christ and the historical Jesus are like the two foci in an ellipse. Although the chief stress is laid on Immanence; it is not the only point of view. There is a strange oscillation which would require a chapter to itself if dealt with in more detail.

“Just. Pears.: – What sayest thou to the Scriptures? Are they the Word of God?

“J. N.: – They are a true Declaration of the Word, that was in them who spoke them forth.

“Higginson: – Is there not a written Word?

“J. N.: – Where readest thou the Scriptures that they are called the Written Word? The Word is spiritual, not seen with carnal Eyes: but as for the Scriptures, they are true, and I witness them true in measure fulfilled in me, as far as I am grown up.

“Just. Pears.: – Why dost thou disturb the ministers in their publick Worships?

“J. N.: – I have not disturbed them in their publick Worships.

“Just. Pears.: – Why dost thou speak against Tythes, which are allowed by the States?

“J. N.: – I meddle not with the States; I speak against them that are Hirelings, as they are Hirelings: those that were sent of Christ, never took Tythes, nor ever sued any for wages.”

After a fairly lengthy discussion, it was pointed out that Nayler could not be sentenced either according to the Blasphemy Act or according to any other law. One or two of the members of the court insisted that Nayler, rather than being set free, should be included amongst those who had been accused in the petition sent by the clergy to

Parliament, and be kept in custody until these points had been settled.

Again Nayler and his friend were in prison for an uncertain period. They were threatened with confinement in the underground dungeon and with irons. The prisoners of that age had to pay for their own maintenance. And when the warders were deprived of their earnings for supplying food, as often happened with Quaker prisoners, many of them resorted to arbitrary treatment. In this way they wanted to force the prisoners or their friends to pay, or at least to get into debt for their maintenance.

Nayler accepted very little of the money that was offered from Swarthmore Hall – probably only what he needed for paper and ink. He kept, for instance, only five shillings out of two pounds sent by Margaret Fell. Nayler tells Fox in a letter that he ate only bread and water.

It is difficult to decide to what extent asceticism, lack of appetite, desire of independence, or confidence that, in spite of everything, he would receive all he needed, influenced Nayler's practice of fasting.

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While Nayler and Howgill were in Appleby Jail, Fox was charged with blasphemy for the third time, and was brought to Carlisle for trial. "And they asked mee if I were the sonne of God, I said yes: They asked mee if I had seen Gods face, I said yes."¹ Under the Blasphemy Act of 1650 a second offence meant exile, and, if this was not complied with, hanging. Anthony Pearson and another Judge amongst Fox's friends sent in a petition on his behalf to Parliament in 1653. It had almost immediate effect. This Parliament did not want to see a

¹ *Short Journal*, p. 32.

young man executed because of his faith, and Fox was set free even before the letter ordering his release arrived.

The procedure was a marked contrast to the severe sentence passed by a later Parliament on James Nayler, when there was no Blasphemy Act to be administered.

FOX AND NAYLER

NAYLER, ill in mind and body, had first met Fox in the winter of 1651 when he was fighting a spiritual struggle of life and death.

Nayler was eight years older than Fox, who was then just twenty-seven years of age. He had been quarter-master in Lambert's cavalry, and his experiences had been far more varied. He had received a more careful education, and had acquired more general knowledge. He was father of a family, owner of a farm, administrator, and soldier. He had lived in the centre of politics for many years. He had been a spiritual leader and, afterwards, when all he had hoped for had come to naught, he had wandered in the wilderness of ill-health, disillusionment, and doubt. While Fox had concentrated his search inwardly and had bored deeply, Nayler had lived and worked and suffered in external events, with their many tasks and problems. Just at the time when he was near breaking-point, weighed down by the overwhelming medley of things, the unified, decidedly manly genius of Fox came within the range of his vision. He found one who did not allow problems to undermine his intellectual life, but went the way of action, cutting the knots, not haphazard, but powerfully, led by his inner light. Fox had neither wife, nor child, nor farm, nor political party to leave. Life lay in front of him in grand simplicity.

With Nayler it was entirely different. He also experienced release and inspiration, but he had to sever strings that had vibrated and to re-direct a

desire which had burned to accomplish great things. Nayler's new outlook led a man with earlier experiences of life and of God to search more deeply towards the main springs. Fox's discovery led a contemplative mind to action. Just because of his hidden qualifications, Nayler emphasises Immanence more forcibly, sometimes almost hysterically. Nayler was more versatile, but less concentrated, than Fox.

Where Fox stood immovable, straightforward, sane, and sometimes hard, Nayler showed a tenderness for what was human, occasionally degenerating into weakness. Was not Nayler's sacrifice to leave all a second time wrung out of him after agonising conflict between opposing loyalties? There was something fatalistic in his choice, akin to the doctrine of predestination, which he condemned in its puritanical form: "But who hath resisted his Will? For there is a Necessity laid upon such as are sent by him; and wo unto them if they go not."¹

The inarticulate world of memories and associations which he carried about with him was never far away, never forgotten, however seldom he referred to it. It made him in his very inwardness more conscious of the many coloured web of human life. Fox had the courageous temperament of a pioneer, whereas Nayler listened and sacrificed. Perhaps this was the outcome of the self-discipline which he imposed upon himself after having hungered for great honour and love. It was perhaps something that he acquired or, even better, it was "grace," not nature.

In spite of his youth, Fox had something of fatherly authority; Nayler had more the temperament of a son, *Sohntypus*. From an intellectual point of view Nayler expressed himself more lucidly

¹ *Works*, p. 89.

than Fox. He kept to his subject and developed it. There was also a lyrical softness in his mode of expression which now and again gave an exquisite charm to his words. Quick in summing up his opponent, his repartee was full of ready wit. He did not use a sledge-hammer, like Fox; he fought with a rapier. If Fox reminds one of the mighty open sea, with its salt breezes, Nayler has something akin to his native moors, fragrant and bright with flowering heather, but at times faded and forlorn. Even his opponents spoke of Nayler's "Commendable gift of good oratory and a very delightful melody in his utterances." His phraseology was not ornate, however, except that he, like other religious speakers, often borrowed biblical idioms. In his writings he occasionally uses a metaphor; a tree that flowers and decays, the sin that withers, a stray bird which cleaves the air.

Nayler's imagination was not visual: but he had the power of understanding what was in the minds of others. His craving for fresh air no less than his slight requirements as regards food, clothing, and possessions, give one the impression of something light and nimble. There was no trace of the farmer in him. How much more readily did he give up his farm rather than his family! The word beauty occurs remarkably often in his writings. An occasional turn of phrase reminds one of Shelley. Nayler had lived through the experience of what he termed beauty, and his intense sincerity of will called him into action in the cause of the eternally beautiful.

There must have been something open, kindly, and fascinating in his personality. Courtesy was one of his most conspicuous characteristics. Both men and women showed him a tenderness without bounds. And, although he had spent so many years as a soldier, it is difficult to picture him being

engaged in wounding and killing. He spoke of the sufferings of war as "The Sword reaching to the very Soul."¹ He may have belonged to those who from pure aversion, combined with a sense of duty, struck the more fiercely. A trait of asceticism was now and again visible; possibly he had also great ambitions. His early letters to Fox speak of a willingness "to be nothing, that all may be closed up in ye will of my father."² "Pray for me that I may be kept in ye power of the Lord humble before him,"³ he wrote on another occasion. It seems as if he had to fight against a wish "to be something."

In contrast to the calm certainty of Fox, a certain diffidence was not foreign to Nayler. There was something agile in his inner being; he was not massive like Fox; he had less muscle and more nerve. Only at high tension, where two antitheses meet, did he find his poise. We may trace them: humility, pride, hunger for love, self-sacrifice – each one realised to the very limit during those silent years about which little is known.

His first self-surrender was due to the war for religious freedom. He went without compulsion, and we may read between the lines how much it cost: when he writes about "the Simple-hearted who . . . had no other ends in all their Actings and Suffering."⁴

Much was new in the next big self-surrender, but certain experiences were a repetition. He clung to his home and at the same time felt compelled to leave it. The ascetic mind sees danger in happiness and ease. It renounces before necessity deprives. We might use a psychological term and describe it as a form of conversion, but there are as many forms of conversion as there are people and mental

¹ *Works*, p. 138.

² *Swm. MSS.*, iii. 65.

³ *Ibid.*, iii. 66.

⁴ *Works*, p. 756.

planes. Nayler's sacrifice had not himself as an end, but was given in a great cause. The new kingdom which was to be won by human transformation had a still wider horizon than the world of ideas to which he had given himself, and which he carried with him as an invisible relic of the past. Now he had to go forward again in "giving up all and following."

His command was given in biblical language, like the army demands for "laws according to the Bible." That the inner experience came as a voice, and not as a vision, was characteristic of one who had always listened for orders. The voice said the same as it had said once before: he must leave all and go away from home.

On the previous occasion, however, there had been a tangible reason. Possibly he was encouraged by others to go, and went together with them. This time the demand came from his innermost soul, strongly influenced by Fox, and was inexplicable to those around him. His sacrifice no longer seemed rational, but paradoxical. There are, however, many psychological factors to account for it: a sense of emptiness after the stimulating life in the army; a sick man's feeling of impotence when he grapples with the problems of marriage and landed property, especially since the Diggers had given him a fresh point of view as regards material possessions. He may have been tempted to surrender altogether and take a step towards death. He was no longer the same young man who once left home. He could not walk into his old world as if nothing had happened; he was greatly changed. And yet he was linked up with his home by innumerable ties, by the longing to go back during the war years, by his human craving for love and happiness. The command from within suggested another kind of satisfaction, however: freedom from all mental and

moral conflicts, from the paralysing effect of hesitation and monotony. And the voice did not come from human tongue. He had no longer any choice.

He alludes once to the agony of "bringing sorrow to the loving hearts of innocent and kindly people." His wife was one of them. It is not unusual in the history of religious personalities that the nearest and dearest, and therefore the most dangerous, have been shut out of their lives. St. Augustine, for instance, sent away the faithful little woman who for years had showered her love upon him. His own piety demanded it. She was superfluous, and must go. That this did not happen in Nayler's case was due to his wife. She did not join him in his new way of life, but, brave and loving, she believed in him, and in any real danger she came and stood beside him. In the depth of winter she left home and children to go to save his good name, his health, and his very life to the best of her ability. "No other love doo I own but that love of Xst, which moved him to lay downe his life for his friends, by which love I am constrained to go out into the world."¹ He was not only one who wanted to give out love. He was also, perhaps unconsciously, one who hungered for love, in spite of having torn himself away from his own loved ones.

Nayler's strange fate made him leave his wife and children and meet instead with an affection and even adulation which, in so far as he did not repudiate their manifestations, led him into misfortunes and difficulties. He spoke always of "men *and* women"; he never forgot the one part of humanity. It was not only a matter of principle with him. He obviously remembered. When a woman was the first Quaker to suffer at the whipping-post and in

¹ MS. Portfolio 33, 145.

the pillory, he was immediately ready to send out a protest, entitled *The Churches gathered against Christ*.

His personal readiness to help knew no limits, and far exceeded his capacity. In this, as in many other ways, he bears a strong likeness to the Franciscans and the Lollards, but he differs from Fox, whose sane and clear judgment prevented him from going beyond his resources.

In appearance he was said to be "a man of good complexion, brown hair, which he wears of an indifferent length, but his beard was short." He had a thin face and aquiline nose. His melancholy expression, visible in his last portrait, was probably connected with special circumstances. His winning and attractive personality was emphasised by both enemies and friends.

He seems to have found it almost impossible to accept support, and reduced his needs to a minimum. The army had given him practice. Occasionally he was aware neither of time, nor space, nor body. But such an attitude has invariably disastrous results. Nayler lost his balance. It is amusing to read in one of his pamphlets as an *argumentum ad hominem* that the opponent broke off the argument at a particularly critical point because it was dinner-time – a reason which would evidently not have occurred to Nayler.

There was nothing severe in Nayler's asceticism. Something within him wanted to burst all bounds, and this made him uncertain of "his measure." His desire for the infinite longed to break all earthly prison bars, and he threw aside earthly splendours for something that was even more glorious. His tendency to fast, or, rather, his periodical disinclination for food, was connected with this natural detachment, as well as with many other sides of his character.

Fox used to make as careful arrangements as possible about food and other necessities, and was not without means. Nayler, on the other hand, took the words of the gospel literally, walking on without scrip or bag or money in his belt in truly Franciscan simplicity. His experience from the Civil War campaigns, his torment in solving the problem of the rights of possession, his few material needs, and his unwillingness to be a burden to others, all play their part in making his subsistence more problematic than it was to Fox's common sense. To Nayler everything led up to "questions" and "ideas" and general principles. He threw his whole life as a stake in the game, trying to plan it in logical and psychological sequence rather than to adapt it to practical circumstances.

Nayler was more nimble than Fox, but learnt from him to exercise self-discipline. "If you be not rash to follow the Motions of the Flesh, but of the Light take Counsel, you shall see every Word and Action discover'd to you in the Light of what sort they are of, from what Root they arise, and what they tend to."¹ Nayler did not, however, realise the dangers of inertia.

Long afterwards, somebody who had listened to Nayler's exposition remembered how he broke off abruptly just as he was explaining an obscure passage in the Bible, as if recollecting that he must not go beyond what he really knew. This sudden pause made a deep impression on the listener.

Just because whole-hearted imitation had been such a strong incentive in his life, he emphasised after his conversion that it is "not imitation, but obedience," that matters. "This we have learned of Jesus in Spirit not to please our selves, nor be Men-pleasers, but to be obedient to another Principle,

¹ *Works*, p. 239, "A Salutation,"

which moves contrary to the Will of Men.”¹ In the following words he summed up both his old and his new ethical life: “And such are you who read a Verse, and see therein what the Saints did, and then set your selves to do the like, but know not that Righteousness, revealed in you in the Faith which they had, which was wrought in them by the Lord, before they brought it to light, and so did not work of themselves, but believed on Him who worketh the Will and the Deed.”²

Nayler's life consists of an unusual number of different epochs. His conversion in 1652 meant a conscious surrender of intellectual solutions of the problems of life in favour of inspirational, or, as he expressed it himself, he had to leave the tree of knowledge for the tree of life. Further, he renounced his claim to leadership, humbly laying it down at the feet of a younger man, on whose strong personality he leant more than he realised for a time.

In times of exhaustion, Nayler succumbed more readily to imitation, expressing himself in stilted borrowed biblical phraseology, evidently finding it difficult to discover the simple and heart-felt words that are otherwise characteristic of his way of speaking.

When Nayler passed out of the gate of his farm he left all the past behind: his pride of fellowship and his hero-worship was given to his new brother-in-arms, as he had once given it to Cromwell or Lambert. He was still something of a boy. As no other Quaker, he speaks of “ye babe in ye.” It was of no consequence that he was eight years older than his new “father,” better educated, and had seen more of the world. There was never the slightest sign that the former quarter-master thought himself

¹ *Works*, p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, “Concerning Perfection,” p. 294.

more important than the simplest brethren in the faith.

In true nobility of heart he seems to have obliterated every trace of social advantage, and in new-found humility to have forgotten himself. One of Nayler's most ardent friends once spoke of George Fox as having "become of an inconsiderable Shoe-Maker or mean Servant, Teacher and Leader of a numerous company of men and women."¹ It would be unthinkable for Nayler to have uttered these words. He was above all difference of class. Perhaps he exaggerated in the opposite direction.

"My father, my father, the glory of Israell, my heart is ravished with thy love above what can be declared. Let me live in thy bosome as a seale sett upon thy heart for ever," wrote Nayler in a letter to Fox during their early comradeship, ready to love and admire to the point of self-surrender.

¹ Robert Rich: *Hidden Things*, Preface.

NAYLER AS AUTHOR

not blind, thou might know that imprisonment is not for the great
 sinners: And a law there is for resurrection: for every square hath
 eye in prison, visible full freely upon thee, who imprisoned art:
 for none art that I might know, not made him visible to others
 for it, for they would not this, unless our God will, that in future
 years our, but never suffer, if they can oppose, and that if thou art
 they art the love of the nation, continuing to the truth, and as thou
 shall see what thou hast done art: yet continuing to his light in
 this I am moved to write to you, not that I look for any more
 than I should say, but that if thou do any amongst you that I
 mentioned for health both art and to mine: such may you your
 friends to of land, by him to be guided by his light, well said: as

written from your friends from
 who in this thought to your friends
 saying: who to of yours is brought
 by the means of James Nayler

DURING his imprisonment in Appleby, Nayler found an opportunity of writing not only letters but articles. His *Spiritual Wickedness* was probably the first printed Quaker tract.¹ In 1656 Parliament was informed that "he writes all their books." It is necessary to investigate contemporary documents in order to realise how much Nayler was in the public eye during these early years of Quaker propaganda. Richard Baxter, the most formidable theological adversary to the Quakers, described Nayler as "their chief leader," he did not even mention Fox. Nayler's ignominy and early death, followed by Fox's long and undisputed leadership, led to a distortion of perspective which unduly minimized Nayler's contribution.

As early as in 1653, Fox seems to have exercised a kind of censorship over Quaker publications. Nayler may have invited this by his generous appeal to Fox: "If any with ye be moudd to answer it, let me know, & I shall forbear to put y^t forth which I write."²

Fox's writings are like monuments in the form of sermons, recording what he has lived through and worked out in his thoughts before it was written

¹ For further details, see Notes, p. 296.

² Swm, MSS., iii. 62, Refers to an answer to a polemic article.

down. Nayler seems to find it more natural to think directly by the aid of the pen. Fox's style is prophetic, like that of the Old Testament. In Nayler's way of writing there is often a personal note of great charm, which reveals even now something of "the delightful melody" in his voice.

I will quote a few short extracts in order to make Nayler's point of view clear, emphasising such passages where the personal note is in evidence. George Whitehead, who in his youth had been so impressed by Nayler's sudden pause so as not to "go beyond his Measure," published after Fox's death a selection of Nayler's works (1716). The majority of these were written during Nayler's last years, and record his changing states of soul, which remind one of St. Theresa and of St. John of the Cross. I will, however, return to these particular records in another connection.

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As regards apologetics, I will quote a few paragraphs from *Truth cleared from Scandals* in which Nayler during his imprisonment in Appleby refuted the accusations of the Lancashire clergy in their petition to Parliament.

"1. Concerning Jesus Christ, who is the Eternal Word of God, by whom all things were made and are upholden, who was before all Time, but manifested in Time for the Recovery of lost Man; which Word became Flesh, and dwelt amongst the Saints, who is the same Yesterday, and to Day, and for ever; who did, and doth dwell in the Saints; who suffered, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, and is set at the Right Hand of God; to whom all Power is given in Heaven and in Earth; who filleth all Places; he is the Light of the World; but known to none, but those who receive and follow him; and

those he leads up to God, out of all the Ways, Works, and Worships of the World, by his pure Light in them, whereby he reveals the Man of Sin, and by his Power casts him out, and so prepares the Bodies of the Saints a fit Temple for the pure God to dwell in, with whom dwells no unclean thing. And thus he reconciles God and Man, and the Image of God, which in Purity and Holiness is renewed; and the Image of Satan, which is all Sin and Uncleaness, is defaced. And none can witness Redemption further than Christ is thus revealed in them, to set them free from Sin: Which Christ I witness to be revealed in me in Measure, Gal. 1. 16, 2 Cor. 13. 5, Col. 1. 27.

"2. Concerning the Scriptures, that they are a true Declaration of that Word which was in them, that *gave* or *spake* them forth, and are of no private Interpretation; but were given forth to be read and fulfilled in the Saints, as they were given forth by the Holy Ghost, without adding or diminishing, and were not given forth for Men to make a Trade upon, to get Money by; but as they are, *they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction*. . . . But they who trade in the Letter, and are ignorant of the Mystery, deny all Perfection. And none can rightly understand the Scriptures, but they who read them with the same Spirit that gave them forth. . . .¹

"3. Concerning Baptism. The true Baptism is that of the Spirit . . . without which, no other Baptism can save us, they being but Figures or Shadows, . . . and those who are Baptised into Christ have put on Christ.²

"4. Concerning the *Lord's Supper*, the true Supper of the Lord, is the spiritual Eating and Drinking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ spiritually. . . . And all who eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup,

¹ *Works*, "Truth cleared from Scandals," p. 20. ² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

have real Communion with Christ the Head, and also one with another. . . .

"5. Concerning the *Resurrection*. That all shall arise to give an Account . . . these Bodies that are Dust, shall turn to Dust, but God shall give a Body as pleaseth him. . . . But they who cannot witness the first Resurrection within themselves, know nothing of the second, but by Hear-say. . . .

"6. . . . Those who judge for the Lord, I honour as my own Life; not with a flattering Honour of putting off the Hat, and bowing of the Knee, which is the Honour of the World, having Men's Persons in Admiration, because of Advantage, for Self Ends, but from my Heart for Conscience Sake, as to the Power which is of God, and not to Men's Persons. . . .¹

"7. Concerning the *Ministry*. The true Ministers of Jesus Christ have always been, and are still, such as came not by the Will of Man, but by the Will of God; neither are they fitted for that Work by any thing of Man, but by God alone. . . . And therefore he chose Herdsmen, Fishermen, and Ploughmen, and such like. And as he gave them an immediate Call, without the Leave of Man; so he fitted them immediately, without the Help of Man: And as they received the Gift freely, so were they to give freely. . . . Those that were sent out by Christ, counted it their Reward to make the Gospel without Charge; neither ever had they any set Means, but went about, having no certain Dwelling Place; neither were Masters, but Servants to all for Christ's sake. . . . And never think to hear the Word of the Lord from their Mouths, who walk contrary to the Scriptures."²

We find in each point an endeavour to change theology into empiricism, but a highly introspective

Works, pp. 21-3.

² *Ibid*, p. 24.

empiricism which turns from all images and symbols to the spiritual life which has inspired them.

Nayler's exceptionally introspective attitude must be considered as one with his life in the past, when he had "a desire to Heaven more than to Holiness,"¹ and when to such a large extent he had set his hopes on the outward reforms by means of which a new government was to be helped forward. It was now clear to him that if a man is full of his own plans and calculations, he hinders the direct power of inspiration. If he tarries too long amidst images, symbols, words, these may impede his meeting with reality. "As in a lively Oracle God is found, in all that's builded after his Image."²

The strong reaction in Nayler was not without risks to his mental balance. But, on the other hand, his past life was echoed in his preaching, adding depth and intensity to its passionate appeal. The evil one, he thought, is never so cunning as when he helps people to shut up God in Heaven as in a prison – instead of letting Him go out into earthly and bodily life, and also into political life.

As his conviction of Divine Immanence was the foundation of Nayler's fight and message, I will quote one or two passages from *Love to the Lost* which expound this faith. One cannot help being struck in several places by the modern way of expressing the events of the soul.

"If thou find that which breathes in thee towards God for Life and Strength against all these Vanities, and all other Evils, That which would have thee follow God out of all the World, I say, if such a Seed thou find in thee, though it be the least of all Seeds in thee, yet that is the Seed of the Kingdom, to which the Promise is ; and no farther than that Principle is raised to reign in thee above all that is

¹ *Works*, p. 338.

² *Ibid.*, p. 422.

contrary to it, no further art thou redeemed by Christ Jesus." ". . . and this lying oppressed and vailed under thy Lusts and Pleasures, is the cause thou knowest not God . . . the talk of Redemption doth not deliver thee from his Temptations; . . . Death and Captivity, and Bonds of Iniquity being over thee . . . and so thou canst not have Power, nor the Promise, nor Salvation, which in the Seed is placed, . . . While thou art in these delights."¹

The new man must be "dug out" of the old: "That which should give the knowledge of God [is] buried."² "But who deny themselves, that they may learn the way of the Lord, to such he freely reveals his way for their return, that he may . . . make known to them their Beginning, and from whence they are digged, that they may see him that bears up the Pillars of the Earth and hath laid the Foundation thereof."³ We must come to "the Resurrection of the Seed,"⁴ and see "the Seed of God raised over Death in Man."⁵ "Now is Christ arisen in his Saints."⁶ "And as the Seed is raised, and Man born thereof, therein is the Father revealed."⁷ "None know Jesus further than they know a Saviour from Sin, and not a cover for Sin."⁸ "That love might open your Hearts which the Earth hath shut and sealed."⁹ "Go not forth to seek that abroad which thou hast lost in thy own House."¹⁰ "Come down to that of God in your Consciences."¹¹ "The Word is not to be fetch'd from above, nor from below; neither is it to seek in a Chapter, or a Steeple-House, but is nigh in the Heart."¹² "This is not a Notion of what was done in another Generation, . . . Hundreds or Thousands of Years distance,

¹ *Works*, pp. 333-4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 362.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 176.

but that which leads to the Beginning of the Work of a new Creature at this day, and a New Birth spiritually begotten, and born, and brought to light, without which none can see the Kingdom of God.”¹

“Sin is within, before it be acted, so must Salvation be within before you be cleansed.”² “Should not every man know his God liveth in him, and go to his God for Life? . . . Will you leave Christ the Fountain which should spring in you, and hunt for your selves? . . . He that is become as a little Child can only understand it, who is not too great in his Thoughts to hearken to that which is little and pure in him.”

“Professions and Forms would limit the Holy One to themselves, and exclude others; but God’s Gift is free in Christ Jesus, and his Tender is to all men. . . . Believe not them who would make you believe you have him not in you, who are past feeling in themselves, and have already rejected him.”³

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Consistent with this demand for sincerity was his demand for unconditional *religious liberty*:

“No man should be hindered of (to wit) the Liberty of his Conscience towards his God but that an Universal Liberty for all sorts of People to worship God, according as Christ shall open Mens Eyes to see the Truth, and as he shall pervade their Hearts by his Spirit; . . . neither can one Man Worship in the Measure of another, but in his own Measure, as he receives of God in Christ Jesus, Faith and Strength, and Spirit, and of Faith, else it is Sin in God’s sight, whatever Men think thereof.”⁴

“And this is just and equal in the sight of God, and all reasonable Men, and that which I know no

¹ *Works*, p. 429.

² *Ibid.*, p. 514.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 537-43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 625.

understanding Man or Woman would be limited in, seeing all have immortal Souls from God, and to him alone must account for them, and not to Men; . . . therefore he is no Wise Man who will leave the Light of Christ that once knows it; to follow another Man's Opinion; And seeing every Man would have this liberty for himself, Why should he go about to deny it to his Brother?"¹

"All Souls are His . . . and set not your selves above them with that which you have received from God: But seek the Life of God in all, to set up over all; . . . and as your Hearts are found Perfect to the Seed (of the Word of God) herein, God will make you wise to Salvation. . . ."²

" . . . and of his Fulness we all receive enlargedness of Bowels towards every Living Soul, whom God hath quickened in the Life towards himself."³

"He that kills the Body because of the Spirit of Error that he says is in it, shews his Power can go no farther. But he that hath Power to confound the Error and save the Life, he is the Saviour to whom the Creature belongs."⁴

The demand for sincerity and spontaneity must necessarily lead to a disregard of the importance of theological learning and ritual order in religious life. We must return from the tree of knowledge to the tree of life, which does not always grow by the "ditch of learning." Knowledge collects and registers; life alone creates.

"But truth seeks no Corners, nor Shelters from earthly Powers; for all that ever were sent out by Christ to Preach the Gospel were called by him alone. . . ."⁵

"But what Rule walk you by, who must have

¹ *Works*, p. 625. ² *Ibid.*, Ep. xii., p. 732. ³ *Ibid.*, Ep. xiii., p. 733.

⁴ *Ibid.*, "Something in answer to two letters sent from New-England,"

p. 743.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

them to such a Pitch of Learning, and so many Years at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, and there study so long in Books and old Authors? And all this to know, what unlearned Men, Fishermen, Ploughmen and Herdsmen, did mean, when they spoke forth the Scriptures, who were counted Fools and Madmen by the learned Generation. . . . And when you have brought them to this Height of Learning, yet the Scripture is a Book sealed to all their Wisdom and Learning; and they from whom you expect the Opening of this Mystery, are at a Jar amongst themselves, what should be the Meaning of it; and have been in all Ages Disputing, Quarreling, Imprisoning, Killing and Burning one another, and would do so now had they Power.”¹

“And as for your Ordinances you cry up so much, are these they, to set up a proud Man, called by you *Master*. . . . Preaching always from a Verse of another Man’s Condition, but not fulfilled in himself.”² “Be faithful in what you know, take heed of making a Profession of what you are not.”³ “And though we would not have you to leave any thing in which you have formerly found any thing of God, till he lead you out of it, yet we would not have you to forsake him who led you therein, and therein was found of you; but him to follow where-ever he goes.”⁴

But personal sagacity is equally hindering. We must find our way from the partial to the source and unity of all power, without haste, calmly waiting for the guidance of the light:

“And abiding in the pure Light of Christ within, you shall see that same Wisdom in your selves, will be consulting and leading you any way, rather than wait on the pure Light, And this hath been a Tempter from the Beginning . . . that which hath

¹ *Works*, p. 43.

² *Ibid*, “The Power and Glory,” p. 45.

³ *Ibid.*, “A Discovery of the Wisdom . . .,” p. 68.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 589.

eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, must not taste of the Tree of Life; but shall surely die. And the Flaming Sword is to this Wisdom: therefore turn your Minds within, and wait for a Wisdom from above, which begins with the Fear of the Lord, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated. And if you keep your Eye to this, you shall see, as this grows, which is pure, there will be Death to that which is sensual and carnal, and of the Serpent; and as you grow in this pure, you will grow in the Knowledge of Christ within you. And this is not to be attained by seeking without, Lo, here and Lo, there, but only by keeping your Eye within to the Invisible, and giving diligent Ear to that Voice that speaks to the Soul and Spirit, for the Ministry of Christ is . . . to the inward Man. . . ."¹

"The living God is not as the Dumb Idols to those who know him; for whom he accepts, he answers, and hath done in all Ages, and they are brought into Union with him, and know him, and how he will be worshipped; not by Hear-say, but from him alone. And their Worship is not an Imitation by the Letter, but they are all taught of him, every one in his Measure."²

"There is an Eye turn'd inward, which pierceth into the hidden Treasure which is eternal, which the natural Eye sees not. And having once got a Sight of the true Riches, he casts away all his Idols and Idol-Worships, and whatever is perishing, and treads upon all that may hinder his Enjoyment thereof, tho' they have been ever so dear unto him."³
 "But they who are brought into the Substance, cannot contend about shadows."⁴

"The Old Man worships a God at a Distance, but knows him not, nor where he is, but by Relation from others, either by Word or Writing. And

¹ *Works*, p. 69. ² *Ibid.*, p. 71. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 73. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

as he receives his Knowledge of him from Men, so his Worship towards him is taught by the Precepts of Men; and if Men, on whom he depends, command him to go to the Steeple-House, he goes; if they command him to pray, he prays; if they command him to sing, he sings; if they bid him hear, kneel, sit, stand, fast, or feast, he doth it . . . but as for any Command from God binding to these, or any Communion with God, or answer of Acceptance from him, upon every Performance, he looks for no such thing now in these Days; as though God was not now the same to his People that he hath been in all Ages.”¹

“The New Man worships a God at hand, where he dwells in his Holy Temple, and he knows him by his own Word from his Dwelling-Place, and not by Relation to others. And thus the Holy Men of God always knew him; for *Abraham* did not know him by what he had spoken to *Noah*, nor the Prophets by what he had spoken to *Abraham*, nor the Apostles by what he spoke to the Prophets . . . but he that believeth hath the Witness within himself.”²

This way of regarding the Bible, as inspiration given in history, forestalls intuitively the modern scientific exposition. It was closely connected with Nayler’s own expectancy of inspiration, but in sharp contrast to that epoch in his past during which he lived “planning for the future.” He had now flung the future also overboard, and retained only the spiritual commands of the present.

The future always lay in the horizontal plane. But since life had received a new dimension, more than the future was at stake: eternity must permeate the present, the moment. It carries no message to anything on the other side of the present. It *must* insist on the now.

¹ *Works*, p. 73.

² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

"The Apostles preached Christ the Spirit, and not the letter, but the Sell-Sermons knows not that; and so must preach such as they have for money . . . but which of the Ministers of Christ came with a Book, saying, this is the word of the Lord, and preacht out of a verse. . . ." ¹

The risk of mistaking one's own private inclinations for true inspiration was perhaps not quite clear to Naylor. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that he was not quite able to differentiate in his apologetic writings between *the condition of soul* which underlies deep *inspiration* and that which predominates when "*complexes*" are allowed to direct our existence. He gives certain criteria, however, which point to the difference: nobody can perceive the Inner Light in a condition of pride, impurity, hurry, or untruth.

"Take heed of what Exalteth itself above his Brother."² . . . "And take heed of that Nature that would know more than God is willing to reveal; for you shall find that unwilling to obey what it knows."³ "If thou knowest such a thing in thee, and standeth single therein, in the meek Spirit, not lifted up above thy Measure, thou wilt come to feel how that of God in thee answers to the things of God."⁴

A most important conception in the preaching of both Fox and Naylor was *measure*, the personal limit which cannot be exceeded without trespassing on Truth. Nobody can go outside himself in order to find a creating and transforming Truth. Such an attempt would lead to borrowing and imitation, and even to boasting and lying.

We find in Bonaventura a passage – selected as prefatory motto to Wickstead's edition of Dante's *Paradise* – where the same thought is lucidly

¹ *A Publike Discovery of the Open Blindness* . . . p. 10.

² *Works*, p. 20. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 32. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

expressed: "*Supremely* may be said absolutely or with respect to such an one. None partaketh God supremely in the absolute sense, but supremely with respect to himself. For each one partaketh him so largely, not that he may not be partaken more, but that he may not advance beyond, and is utterly content with that state which he hath."¹

This particular "measure" is an incentive to individual activity as well as a limit to *Hybris*.² The classics laid stress on the latter; the Quakers put signal stress on both. Initiative goes hand in hand with individual limitation. The expression "in measure" occurs so frequently that its paramount significance in connection with the autonomous religious life which here is vindicated should be recognised. Man is born slave under his inherited tendencies; in God he becomes free-born, after his "measure."³ So that he becomes a child of the Highest. "Men and Women . . . set themselves on work to do the like; and so make an Imitation instead of Obedience."⁴ "And though the fulness of this Obedience is not attained at once, yet the least measure of it is perfect, and accepted."⁵ Man is changed in accordance with that towards which he directs his soul: "That will which is of God only, leads to God."⁶ "There is no Will free for God, but that which is turned against (and free from) Sin."⁷

The moral emphasis is extraordinarily striking. A belief in God which does not draw on all the resources of a being and express itself in the life of thought and action is only a shadow, a phenomenon

¹ Cf. Plato and also the Swedish philosopher, C. J. Boström. Note the influence of the English Neo-platonic School on the Quaker message. Cf. further, Sir Henry Jones: *A Faith that Enquires* (Translator's note).

² The Greek goddess of pride and arrogance. ³ Cf. *Works*, p. 29.

⁴ *Works*, p. 302.

⁵ *Ibid*, "Love to the Lost," p. 305.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

of division. "So that Love is seen to be filthy which spares Filthiness, which defiles the Temple of God."¹ "Nor can you know [God] till he be revealed in you; nor can he be known in you, but as you come to be cleansed, for with him dwells no uncleanness. Thus you that plead for your Sins, plead against your own Souls, which cannot be satisfied but by his presence, who is not seen present where Sin is standing."² "I came to see the Faith of Christ . . . and the dead Faith without Works: And I find, that it is not the Faith of Christ, to believe that Men could never be perfect, nor overcome the Devil or Sin; . . . it was never his Faith to revenge Evil, but to overcome it with Good . . . it was never his Faith to observe his own Will, his own Times, or the World's Customs, but to observe his Father in all things."³

The doctrine of Immanence was with Nayler neither æsthetic nor romantic; its focus was altogether ethical. Nayler was conscious of the tremendous price to be paid for a faith which takes its commands from within, and has no use for an intermediary. The man "whose Heart is in the Earth, calls him a Fool and a Mad Man, and thinks it strange that he will not serve the World, nor the Times, for Money, nor have Mens Persons in Admiration because of Advantage, nor observe the Heathenish Customs for fear of Men; but is made clear to declare against them in open Streets and Markets. And then the Nature which lives in these Things, takes up Stones to cast at him, and cries against him in Tumults, Away with him, it is not fit he should live, for he breaks all Customs and Traditions, which we and our Fathers have lived in so many years, and turns the World up-side down."⁴

¹ *Works*, p. 288.

² *Ibid.*, "A Salutation," p. 213.

³ *Ibid.*, "Living Faith," pp. 434-5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

The experiences of the new campaign were to be harder than the last. "I came to see the Hardship of him that will be a Soldier of Jesus,"¹ Nayler would one day say with justification. As a writer he was equally a soldier; he only used other weapons.

¹ *Works*, p. 453.

TO LONDON

FROM the prison in Appleby, Nayler took the road to Cumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire, his own county. To walk along the open road, breathing the fresh air from moors and fells, must have refreshed his mind and body after the long confinement in prison. In Cumberland the meetings had for many years taken place at Pardshaw Crag, where the limestone rocks gave shelter from the bleak winds.

We get an occasional glimpse of what happened during the spring of 1653 in this Galilee of the Friends. One of Cromwell's old Ironsides, William Edmundson, came from Ireland to visit his home, and heard of Nayler's new activities. Being in all likelihood acquainted with his old interests, Edmundson travelled a long way in order to see and hear him, although his time was short. Nayler spoke powerfully and with few words, which, however, went straight to Edmundson's heart. He was the first to bring the new message to Ireland. Nayler himself described an exceptional meeting in this way: it took place in complete silence, and so many were convinced that people complained that more than half the city had turned Quakers.

In discussions Nayler seems to have possessed great charm of manner. Direct opponents often drew back, disinclined to say anything that might wound him. He was asked to speak in one place after another, and seemed indispensable in those theological disputes in which the age revelled. The

Vicar of Chesterfield invited him to a "Christian Conference," addressing his invitation to "James Nayler, Wandering Quaker, and his Fellow-Seducers."

In one of his letters to Fox, Nayler relates that "They sent me a challenge to meet them at such an hour." He arrived at the meeting-house and waited for two hours. There were plenty of people, but none of the clergy came, so Nayler went silently away. That made them all feel ashamed, and they explained that the meeting had been postponed. When Nayler came again, he was asked to perform a miracle in order to prove his calling.

Fox gives a vivid account of one of Nayler's discussions in his *Journal* (1654): "Ja: Nailor mett mee in Darby sheere where 7 or 8 preists had chalenged him to a dispute & I had a travaile in my spiritt for him & ye Lord aunswered mee: & I was moved to bid him Goe on: & y^t God Almighty would goe with him & give him ye victory [in his power]: & soe ye Lord did y^t all ye people sawe ye preists was nothings & foiled: & cryed a Nailor a Nailor hath confuted y^m all."¹

Evidently Nayler stood in the breach on this occasion, while Fox was acting as reserve. There was the best possible understanding between the two, and between all the Friends, which is proved by their frequent and affectionate letters. Farnsworth sent excellent accounts to Nayler of his family, and Nayler begged Fox to let him live in his heart for ever. The year 1654 was the year of conquest in the history of the Quakers. About seventy of them set out in couples like the disciples of Christ, wandering into different parts of England and encountering varied fates and adventures. Swarthmore Hall continued to be the head-quarters, where nearly all

¹ *Journal*, i. 195.

letters and writings found their way, whether they told of success, whipping, imprisonment, finance, or "convincement." A considerable number of these letters were addressed to Fox and Nayler jointly. Margaret Fell appealed, on account of what she considered an unjust criticism, to Fox and Nayler, and they were both called before the magistrates in Bristol, January 1655, charged with preaching Roman Catholicism.

In the new year of 1655 a conference was held at Swannington, in Leicestershire. No less than two hundred Quakers were present, and several Ranters came to disturb the peace, although many of them were "convinced." Fearing that the conference was of a political nature, the authorities reported it to the Protector with much alarm: they had a printer with them, and six people were busy writing continuously. A fresh report gave more detailed information: the printer was Giles Calvert, who stayed for eight or ten days, and then went to London with two or three quires of paper to be printed.

It was chiefly owing to this meeting that George Fox, with Nayler as one of his companions, was brought to London in February to give an explanation to the Protector. Cromwell, like the authorities in Bristol, had been informed that Quakers and Royalists had leagued themselves against him. Fox was called upon to give a written undertaking not to use arms against the Government. "My kingdom is not of this world, therefore with the carnall weapon I doe not fight, but am from those things dead, from him who is not of the world, called of the world by the name George ffox, and this I am ready to seale with my blood."¹ This, by the way, was one of the first public utterances in favour of the Quaker principle to resist the use of arms.

¹ To Oliver Cromwell, 1654. *Journal* i. 161.

When Cromwell and Fox met eye to eye, the Protector felt an instinctive admiration for the Quaker leader which explains his future lenience towards all Quaker attacks. "Hee catcht mee by ye hande & saide these words with teares in his eyes: Come againe to my house: for if thou & I were butt an houre in a day togeather wee should bee nearer one to ye other." And he added that he wished Fox "noe more ill then hee did to his owne soul."

These two had much in common. Both were born leaders of men with strongly developed will-power. Fox's severity appealed in many ways to Cromwell as a Puritan. Was not St. Paul's Cathedral to him like a large useless heap of stones, a centre of old superstition and idolatry? The Quakers often had occasion to pass the desolate building, as the printing-press of Giles Calvert, where so many of their writings were published, lay opposite the Cathedral.

Among the first Quakers to go to London was Gervase Benson, on whom the recent trial had made such a strong impression. He was greatly dissatisfied with the state of religion in the capital. "There was now nothing practical preached or that pressed reformation of life, but high and speculative points and strains that few understood, which left people very ignorant." London was seething with political unrest. The most divergent groups had their headquarters, or at least their branches, in the capital.

Two women from the North of England, one of them Isabel Buttery, who was some time a member of Nayler's household, had distributed a pamphlet written by Fox, bearing the significant title *The Way to the Kingdom*. Thanks to them, small groups began to meet in silence and were eager to come into touch with the powerful movement in the North of which they heard great things.

Before long, Francis Howgill, Nayler's fellow-prisoner in Appleby, and his young friend, Edward Burrough, chose London as the centre of their work. It was Burrough, barely twenty years old, who had been disowned by his influential family when he joined the despised movement. Howgill looked after him as a father, and they worked together until Burrough, at the early age of twenty-eight, died in prison. When they first came to London, Burrough used to watch the boxing-matches between the young apprentices and, when their champion called in an outsider for a bout, Burrough would step into the ring and speak to the watching crowd about the real fight for which men are destined.

"A Report spread About ye City yt there was A sort of People Come there yt went by ye name of Plaine north Cuntry Plow men, who did differ in judgmt to all other People in yt City."¹ The country people from the North went both to churches and playgrounds to "thresh" and "plow," and to the small circles in the homes where the rough work had already been done. It was not so much new beliefs that they brought as a fresh religious experience. Many also let their husks fall during the Friends' "threshing" and found courage to penetrate into the kernel of their soul.

When Fox, together with Nayler and others, was brought to London to answer the Protector, as many as thirty different Friends' meetings were held there, and Howgill and Burrough had more work than they could well manage. The largest meeting-place was an old house in Aldersgate called "The Bull and Mouth," – the "new hired great tavern chapel," as opponents called it.

While Fox was kept in custody, Nayler was drawn into the work. He had earlier written a letter which

¹ "*The First Publishers of Truth*," p. 163.

in some respects directly criticised Howgill and Burrough: "As for that which we wrote to the of about James letter to us: we have spoken to him of it it is dead and so lett it pase and what ever any judg of us yett in the loye wch thinkes no evill is our life,"¹ wrote Howgill to Margaret Fell. Another passage in the same letter ran: "Here is our deare Brother, James Nayler whome we are reioysed to se and he us and he reioyses abundantly in his people: I hope he will stay a season heare: it is of great worth and the citie is calm."

Nayler's first two Sundays in London were, however, far from peaceful. He found London a "great and wicked place," and met with such furious opposition that he spoke of "intents to blood," broken window-panes, hooliganism, and stone-throwing. Nor was Fox happy in London. He described its vanity and superficiality with humour and astonishment. He was present at one or two meetings, and the London Friends found him peculiar at first. Letters to Swarthmore go on to relate that if George was present at a meeting, nearly all others were silent.

Fox soon left London, but Nayler stayed on until March 1655. London abounded with old soldiers, and the political ideas that filled the air must have had a far stronger attraction for Nayler than for other Friends, who had not in the same way entered into the past.

In the early spring Nayler left London, which he disliked, and went home to Yorkshire, but when the summer came he was again strongly drawn towards the capital. With his departure for London a new epoch began in the history of his own life and of the Quaker movement.

¹ Swm. MSS., i. 86.

POPULAR PREACHER IN LONDON

IN the summer of 1655, Nayler returned to London, and as he approached the city he experienced a strange trepidation. He must have had a premonition of the suffering which lay before him.

The previous months had resembled a triumphal march. In debates or at meetings the interest and enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. It was probably not only the quaint irrelevance between Nayler's polished manner and ready wit on the one hand, and his simple country appearance on the other, that attracted his audience, but also more deep-lying personal qualities. In the midst of the fight he showed a lovable charm, accentuated by his care-free detachment.

Fox had not escaped the type of worship which follows every public man more or less as a shadow, but he shook it off with a grim humour or looked upon it as a tribute to the great cause with which he identified himself. If it did appeal to any side of his nature, it was to his masterfulness rather than to his desire for love. Respect was always the keynote in the personal tributes paid to Fox, and he had the art of making his admirers practically useful, so as to serve the end he had in view. Nayler, on the other hand, was the object of an almost romantic adoration from both men and women. Far from utilising it in some practical way, he became its hapless victim. He had not Fox's gift of keeping others at arm's length.

A few weeks before Nayler came to London, an

old minister had addressed some sharp words of warning to him: "Take good heed while thou forbears to have outward reverence of men, as capping and kneeling and the like, that thou steal not men's hearts away from God to thyself, and so lord it on their conscience that they have neither God nor Scripture, nor any privilege of their own experience, but take thee as a demi-god and to make thee a mental idol."¹

He compared Nayler with Peter who was to fall. If ever speech or writing or divine revelation could exempt anybody from a fall, Solomon and David would have been spared the risk of falling so low, for they had experienced all that Nayler professed to know. "And if hereafter either thou or thy fellows have a mind to write to me, I'll tell you when to do itt, when both the heavenlie and earthlie grounds of your minds is soe shaken that you cryie out with our Saviour: My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me! . . . Then will I tell you more of my waie than you tould to me." Nayler's reply, written in May 1655, was feeble compared with the stirring solemnity of the old man's words, which were to come true in an unforeseen way.

It is probable that Nayler, like the other travelling preachers, lodged at Gerard Roberts's house, where the Quakers had their head-quarters. This man was of great assistance to the Friends as adviser and manager in judicial and financial matters. Most likely Burrough and Howgill also stayed there. People complained that their preaching did not possess the same dynamic power as before, which would not have been surprising after nearly a year of superhuman efforts. They seemed also to find it difficult to exercise a right judgment in restraining as well

¹ Caton MSS., 2.

as admitting free speech to the women, and a certain impatience with them was not unusual.

It is always a delicate question how to let spontaneity have its dues without infringing on what is seemly in meetings of the Quaker type. Fox made the following suggestion: "But such as are tender, if they should be moved to bubble forth a few words, and speak in the seed and Lamb's power, suffer and bear that, — that is the tender. And if they should go beyond their measure, bear it in the meeting for peace, and order's sake. . . . But when the meeting is done, then if any be moved to speak to them, between you and them . . . do it in the love and wisdom that is pure and gentle from above."¹

The criticism which Nayler had forwarded to Howgill and Burrough in the spring did not cause any bitterness between them. Personal contact effaced every shadow of suspicion. But "there may have been reasons which made it seem to be well that the guidance of the London work should pass into other hands for a time,"² as Braithwaite, with his intimate knowledge of first-hand documents, cautiously suggests.

Towards the end of June, Fox returned to London in order to meet the leading workers in the capital. A short time afterwards, first Howgill and then Burrough felt a call to visit Ireland. After having taken an affectionate farewell of Nayler, they set out for Swarthmore and the north country, and from thence they continued their long journey to Ireland. Margaret Fell wrote to a friend in Grayrigge, Howgill's native place, in 1655: "Look not forth from your own measures at others Conditions, and so neglect your own."³ She appealed with

¹ Braithwaite, p. 310.

² Ibid., p. 213.

³ *A Brief Collection of Remarkable Passages, etc., of Margaret Fell* (London, 1710), p. 69.

glowing ardour against anything that might be regarded as a split, and exhorted them to remain in the "Light which is one." When Fox, after a week, went away from London, Nayler was left to carry on the enormous work alone.

Up to that time all conflict had been solved in the great unity. "Dwell in the Measure, which God hath given you of himself, in which is no strife, but Unity."¹ There had been no question of prestige. The quarter-master had looked up to the cobbler, the elder had submitted to "that of God" in the younger.

Subconsciously something must have occurred between Fox and Nayler, however, when Nayler accompanied him to the city gates. "And as I parted from him I cast my eyes upon him & a feare stricke in mee concerninge him," writes Fox in his *Journal*. They little knew that next time they met a cloud of darkness was to have placed a distance between them greater than that between London and Cornwall.

Outwardly, however, everything seemed to spell unusual success. "James is very serviceable here, and his fame begins to spread in the city, seeing that he hath public disputes with many," wrote the Friends to Swarthmore.² One of his antagonists, John Deacon, gives the following account of the prestige in which Nayler was held: "A certain London Quaker had gone about from meeting to meeting stoutly denying the doctrine of present perfection. No sooner, however, was he informed that Nayler both held and preached this doctrine, than he exclaimed: 'Doth James say so? Nay, then, it is truth!'"³

Rebecca Travers, who was a zealous Baptist, gives an account of Nayler's appearance in July at a

¹ Ep. 94.

² *Letters of Early Friends*, p. 37.

³ Quoted from Brailsford, p. 90.

public discussion with the Baptists at the Glasshouse in Broad Street. She "would have been glad to have heard the Baptists get the victory but . . . it proved quite contrary, for the countryman stood up on a form over against the Baptists and . . . she could feel his words smote them, that one or two of them confessed they were sick and could hold it no longer, and the third . . . shamed himself in bringing scriptures that turned against him, and she was confounded and ashamed that a Quaker should exceed the learned Baptists."¹

Rebecca Travers was one of the most noble and dignified friends that Nayler made in London. She found the Quakers simple and unlearned compared with the Baptist theologians. One day, however, she was invited to a dinner where Nayler was one of the numerous guests. "One called a Gentleman who had run through all Professions, and had high notions, put many Curious Questions to J. N. which he answered with great Wisdom, but not so plainly as she would have had him, because she coveted to know hidden things: on which J. N. putting his Hand over the Table, and taking her by the Hand, said, 'Feed not on Knowledge, it is as truly forbidden to thee, as ever it was to Eve; it is good to look upon, but not to feed on: for who feeds on Knowledge, dies to the Innocent Life': which he spoke in Power and was received by her as the Word of Truth."²

Nayler himself gives another picture from his London experiences in a letter to Margaret Fell: "Yesterday I had a meeting at a house called Lady Darcy's; many were there from the Court, some called lords (as it is said,) divers ladies, divers officers

¹ Quoted from Braithwaite, p. 242.

² *Persecution Exposed*, by John Whiting, pp. 176, 177 (London 1715).
Quoted from Brailsford, p. 89.

of the army, some of the (chief?) priests in the city, how many I know not; for they got behind a ceiling, and came not out till I was gone. Though there were some Baptists asked a question or two after I had done, (tending to plead for sin,) and were silenced; yet not one priest would speak a word, nor stand up for their kingdom. I was moved to call to any that had anything to oppose, to speak to the face; but none would answer. Two or three of Henry Vane's brethren were there all the while, and he himself kept behind, [but] came after all was ended: he is very loving to Friends, but drunk with imaginations: there is a band of them sunk therein, and do harm to some amongst them, who else would be very tender; divers are brought to tears when they hear the Truth."¹

There is a good deal of childlike vanity in this letter, an obvious delight that he who once came bleeding and persecuted to Swarthmore could write to the old Hall that he was associating with important men like Sir Harry Vane. It is not impossible that this news, owing to the slow postal services, reached Fox in January 1656, when he had just been put into the notoriously bad prison in Launceston for refusing to take the oath which Cromwell demanded on assuming the Protectorate. And Fox was kept there for nine long months. The terrible orgies of defilement, seldom encountered except in cases of insanity, which a warder imposed on the cleanly Fox, are almost beyond description. Fox has a page in his journal which makes one shudder as one reads. While he and many other Friends were lying in an evil-smelling prison, being ill-treated by a perverted warder, Nayler was moving among lords and ladies in London, arranging his work without reference to Fox.

¹ *Letters of Early Friends*, p. 38.

The comparison may have had a bitter taste, and possibly aroused feelings of heroic pride in the sufferers as they compared their lot with that of the spoilt favourite.

This seems to underlie Fox's admonition when he quotes the characteristics of false prophets, as usual having some particular instance in view: "They love the cheifest places at feasts, the cheifest seats in the assemblies, greetings in the markets & to be called of men Master."¹

¹ *Letters from Fox*, Portf. 33. 11.

A CHAPTER ON WOMEN IN THE QUAKER RANKS

THE first one to sympathise with Fox was a woman. When he met the "shattered Baptists" in 1647, his preaching was still "mean and weak." But it was understood by Elizabeth Hooton, a married woman of middle age living in comfortable circumstances – "not at first a likely convert for an unknown lad of twenty-two."¹ She was evidently one of the women preachers among the Baptists when Fox came to her native town. There is reason to believe that she and Fox exercised a strong influence over each other.

At the same time that Fox was given the command to go out into the world, Elizabeth Hooton began her work as a "Publisher of Truth," continuing her mission until her death at an advanced age. She had many followers. In face of all the controversy through the ages, where the same arguments have been used over and over again as regards the rights of women to be the partners of men in work, it is refreshing to read the simple statement in Barclay's *Apology* that the "manifest Experience puts the Thing beyond all Controversie."² Barclay can support his words by an utterance of Fox concerning meetings of women: "These that are against ye women's meetings . . . that they see noe service for them: then they may hold their tongues, and not oppose them that do see the service. If they be blind and without sight, . . . there is none imposes anything upon them: for God never received the blind for a sacrifice, neither can his people."³

¹ Brailsford: *Quaker Women*, p. 17.

² Barclay's *Apology*, p. 282.

³ Brailsford: *Quaker Women*, p. 283.

In this connection the question of domestic authority became acute. Asked whether God Himself had not ordained that the husband should rule over his wife, Fox pointed out that the man's dominion belonged to sin, but that man and wife in the new life were each other's equals and true help-meets. Therefore man and wife often stood side by side, or, sometimes as the result of an urge from within, they went out to preach their message separately, their communion "in the Light" not being disturbed thereby.

The persuasion that women as well as men were of age "in the Light" led to an equality also within the society – a social experiment, which in the beginning greatly perturbed outsiders. A London apprentice was taken to task by his master because he frequented a meeting where there were no other preachers except two women.

One of the earliest of these woman messengers visited St. Paul's Cathedral, where a portion was still used for services. Isabel Buttery stationed herself outside the door selling Quaker tracts, although it was the Sabbath. She was brought into the sacristy and examined by the Mayor, but she defended herself so vigorously that her voice drowned the parson in the pulpit. After which she was sent to Bridewell.

Innumerable examples could be given to prove the new daring of the women. Their message often took the form of curious "signs." One woman rode through Canterbury with a torch in her hand: she wanted to imply that the sleepy old cathedral city needed light above all things. Because of this insinuation she had to go to prison. As regards suffering, endurance, and courage, the women showed themselves fully equal to the men.

London congregational life, especially as regards the women, differed in many ways from that of the

country communities. London, with its 500,000 inhabitants, offered a wider field for social work than the small villages and towns in the North. Anne Downer, daughter of a clergyman, and better educated than most women of that age, became one of the most notable of Quaker women in London, and the first real preacher among them. Rebecca Travers has been mentioned earlier. She took a prominent part in social work in the capital. Sarah Blackbury, another highly educated woman connected with Society, called the first meeting for women to ease the lot of prisoners, and of sick and destitute people generally. She wrote later in defence of James Nayler.

Even where the principle of equality was accepted "in the Light," the men, who had often no experience of such comradeship in the world of realities, regarded it with some apprehension. There were undoubtedly difficulties in the way of mutual understanding. Wherever there is emptiness of spirit, commonplace reiterations following logical grooves are to men less irritating than emotional ejaculations and other "unspeakable" or contradictory remarks, to which women are apt to resort when they want to break away from the beaten track. Drought and deluge were the two extreme dangers of the meetings. The psychology of the male was probably more liable to the first exaggeration, that of the female to the latter, under otherwise identical conditions of spiritual poverty.

How readily did not Edward Burrough dismiss contrary women as "goats rough and hairie," without pausing to enquire into the reason for their opposition. In the days of the first enthusiasm, the feeling of unity was so strong, and the perception of real needs so deep, that embarrassing situations hardly arose. But, when the first exhilaration abated, regulations and external rules had to make up for dearth

of spirit. The experience of the Inner Light, which should be the quest of every individual, may lead to abuse, just as ritualistic forms do. About 1655 there was a tendency among the Quakers to set up the authority of Fox, and also of the early men leaders, against the unrestrained forms of spiritual communion of the first creative period.

Against this tendency some of the London women, who had previously belonged to the Ranters or similar groups, were not slow to rebel. Something of women's rights is discernible in their discussions. They objected to the readiness of Howgill and Burrough to refer to the authority of Fox, and appealed to Nayler who, ideologically and uncompromisingly, clung to the original conviction that all men have an indwelling possibility of being directly "taught by God." Burrough denounced Martha in a very outspoken letter, where he amongst other things accuses her of a "lying spirit of divination."

The renunciation of all plans had in Nayler's case been the result of a radical change of mind, and not a sudden whim. The opposition of many of the women, on the other hand, was dictated by direct impulse. When, apart from this question of principle, the fascination of Nayler's personality exercised a strong influence, we can easily understand the difficulties which might arise when such ill-sorted champions set out to defend what might be called the principle of personality.

It is remarkable that, at a time when the Quaker ranks closed against Nayler, it was not only the emotional and restless among the women who took his part. Rebecca Travers and Sarah Blackbury, trusted leaders of their sex and movement, showed Nayler unbroken friendship and respect, and believed in him when Fox did not.

IN THE WHIRLWIND

"A Cloud of Darknesse."

JAMES NAYLER, who was the object of so much interest, opposition, and adoration, was during this spring (1656) an extremely tired and overwrought man. The short period during which he was locked up in prison for refusal to take an oath may have given him a little respite, but the prison was probably chiefly a fresh reception-room for friends as well as for controversial and curious people. Nayler lacked Fox's ability of arranging, as far as possible, for his bodily health. Fox wrote from his prison hole in Launceston asking Anne Downer to come down to Cornwall and act as his housekeeper and secretary. She walked with alacrity a distance of more than a hundred miles in order to cook his food and write his letters. Nayler does not seem to have asked for any such useful tokens of friendship; rather did he ward off every offer of this kind. Those who visited him brought neither hash nor pudding. They were laden with grumbling or adoration. Nayler resorted to fasting more than ever during periods of depression, either because he disliked food or for other reasons.

At this time Howgill and Burrough were expelled from Ireland by Henry Cromwell, who held command there. Naturally enough, he regarded their pacifist teaching as dangerous to the army. Nayler implored them to come to London and help. He was staggering under his load. Towards the end of April, Burrough came to his assistance, and later on also Howgill. Nayler had also a change of scene,

journeying North at the request of Fox, in order to act as mediator in a quarrel between the Friends in Lincoln. "Our deare bro. G. ff. hath writ to me to go into yorkeshire & have a meeteing, & I see not but I shall goe with speed & backe againe, for I am not fre of this place, I see god `will doe a great worke yet here."¹

His mission was successful. A shadow may have passed across his soul at the thought of travelling at the request of somebody else, acting as his superior. Something in Fox's tone had hurt him. But he said nothing about it yet. He was still more exhausted, however, both in body and soul, when he came back to London in the heat of summer. His spending of himself went beyond all limits, and his ego lost its "measure."

Two sinister motives became at this time interwoven in Nayler's history; the one was obvious, the other more subtle, yet both were intrinsically connected with each other. The first was the influence exercised over him by Martha Simmonds, the latter his dawning disappointment in George Fox. We must also bear in mind the silent worlds, political and domestic, which still lived in his memory, although many threads linking him with the past had been broken off. Nayler was now about forty years old, and had taken the unquestioned position of leader among the London Friends, not by any direction from Fox, but by sheer force of personality.

Fox remarked later of Nayler that when he "went out" (according to Fox, already in June) he had mostly associated with such people that were at heart not Quakers, but "Ranters and loose persons," who believed in "worldly prophecies" (such as the Advent of Christ in 1656). It would be interesting to know more of the political connections involved in

¹ Swm. MSS., iii. 82.

the intercourse with the two brothers-in-law, Giles Calvert and Thomas Simmonds. Martha Simmonds afterwards mentioned that a prophet, whose name she refused to mention, had anointed James Nayler as "King of Israel." This was probably nothing more than one of the biblical paraphrasings of the age, intended to convey that Nayler was regarded as the leader of the London Friends ("Israel"). After the return of Howgill and Burrough, Martha certainly advanced such a proposal. There is, however, nothing to suggest a connection between the Fifth Monarchy Men's expectation of Christ's Advent and the "sign" which Nayler was shortly to illustrate. But in 1657 it was generally assumed that the Quakers were connected with the Fifth Monarchy Men.

The letters to Swarthmore began to breathe dissension: "I am of James," "I am of Francis and Edward." Mention was made of "a higher thing" which, according to Martha, would be represented by James Nayler, perhaps a stronger emphasis on immanence as against organisation, or a protest against the type of ruler which more and more seemed to become embodied in Cromwell. Thomas Simmonds was entirely with his wife in this respect. A number of young men, John and Hannah Stranger, and probably Robert Rich, belonged also to this group of enthusiasts. The latter was a wealthy merchant of good family, warm-hearted and keen, who entertained a singularly strong affection for Nayler, and before long became opposed to Fox, whom he describes as "highly injurious to Christians," and one who "seeks an unjust and oppressive dominion over their consciences, contradicts by his practice his own principles."¹

As both Martha Simmonds and Hannah Stranger

¹ *Hidden Things Brought to Light*, Preface.

will play a strange part in the events discussed in the next few chapters, it may be well to point out their good qualities. Martha proved herself to be an excellent nurse, in which capacity she was employed by Cromwell's sister, Major-General Desborough's wife. And Hannah Stranger, the wife of a London citizen, was later on to be commissioned by Fox to request an audience with Charles II in order to secure the release of Margaret Fell, a task which he would hardly have left in the hands of an irresponsible person.

Nayler did not take a definite stand, owing to his natural reluctance to reprove anyone who might be moved by the Lord. Where Fox would have given short shrift, Nayler allowed his reverence for the potential Inner Light of others to deteriorate into credulity. He interpreted their psychological development by his own. He did not judge according to their limitations, but according to their possibilities. The situation must necessarily become acute when one is prepared at any cost to uphold inwardness against organised authority.

Behind Nayler's conversion in 1652 lay deep suffering, which had its root in disappointment with the spirit which was to rule in "the new kingdom." Like scores and scores of officers and men who had listened to Cromwell's solemn pledges, he began to feel keenly disillusioned in the Protector. His contact with Sir Harry Vane, and still more with old associates from the army, had given new force to his bitterness and disappointment. During this particular summer, rumours were more persistent than ever that Cromwell was aspiring after the crown.

In contrast to the Old Testament point of view, which was uppermost in the Long Parliament, the idea of a Kingdom of God built on the foundations of the New Testament was very marked in James

Nayler. The picture of one who rules by serving and suffering for his fellow-men occupied the centre of his world. The only liberating power, practical or otherwise, was Christ as he saw Him, transferred from Jerusalem of ancient history into the centre of the spiritual world, radiating a path of light into every human soul. This viewpoint was the same as that of the Fifth Monarchy Men, with a big exception. Nayler was in absolute opposition to their methods of conspiracy, violence, and devastation. He had come to see that the Heavenly Kingdom could be won only by an inward change, and his whole message – like that of Fox – challenged his hearers to bring about such a change. With Nayler the old soldier, however, the antithesis between spiritual and worldly power had a more concrete and personal sting than with Fox.

The old wound of disillusionment had been opened up in more than one sense. Some estrangement had crept in between Nayler and Fox. Burrough and Howgill, on the other hand, seemed to be under the immediate guidance of Fox.

The roads to Launceston were full of Quakers, whose different errands took them to Fox's prison. They came not only to appeal, to criticise, to complain, and to be edified, but also to offer themselves voluntarily as prisoners instead of their leader – a willingness for self-sacrifice which is said to have moved Cromwell to tears. Perhaps just because Fox was lying in fetters in such a remote place while his followers continuously appealed to him, his intervention seemed more marked than formerly. It was unavoidable that the question of authority should come uppermost, now that the creative phase of spontaneous inspiration was passed. We are justified in pointing to a certain analogy between Cromwell and Fox: movements grow into kingdoms, and the

position of responsibility of the chief is different from that of the former warrior. Nayler's influence in London had undoubtedly caused Fox great anxiety.

Occasional jarring sounds were heard among the Friends. Fox was likened to a "pope," the preachers to "bishops." Margaret Fell was said to "adore Fox" and regard him as infallible. Fox was accused of putting himself "in God's place" and ordering others about after his own pleasure. It is possible that Fox by this time had sent out his instruction that men should bare their heads during prayer. Such general recommendations in matters of form seemed opposed to the conviction that the Lord Himself should teach His people. The principles of co-ordination and of stabilisation had become of greater importance than the creative principle of direct inspiration.

Nayler, who rebelled against any autocratic gestures, was probably hypersensitive to Fox's intervention, which was generally sound and well-considered. Had not Nayler flung his own "planning" and desire for leadership to the winds when he met Fox, his "father" although many years his junior? He imagined that Fox envied him his leading position among the London Friends. He was not convinced that Fox was infallible, and was unconscious of the fact that his own acquiescence in receiving personal homage might be akin to imperiousness – or rather to ambition and craving for affection. Sensitive to excess, he revolted against any form of pressure.

Perhaps the old wound had been forced open by Nayler's indignation against Fox, to whom he had given his faith above all other men. Was it not essential that "the inner Christ," his regal type of gentleness and his kingdom of peace, should be demonstrated in the face of the Fifth Monarchy Men, of Cromwell and of – Fox?

Nayler was not one who wished to command others. But he was excessively proud, unconsciously ambitious, and, above all, intent on preserving his temporal and spiritual independence. On the other hand, he lacked the power of setting bounds to the demands that others made on him. At this moment he was, in addition, tired to death, full of grief, and probably not without symptoms of his old physical complaints.

THE CRISIS

THE powerful and enthusiastic Martha Simmonds was eight years younger than Nayler. Through her brother and her husband she must have been in touch with the various movements which tried to find a voice in the pamphlets "Printed for Giles Calvert at the Black Spread Eagle at the West-end of Paul's." She may have attended the conference at Swannington which gave rise to so much apprehension with regard to political Quaker agitation. Without consulting her friends, she set out on minor expeditions of her own. She did not pause to consider that Burrough and Howgill were the first to establish "meetings" in London, but announced that Nayler was more suitable as a leader than those who took orders from Launceston. John Audland wrote to Margaret Fell that it was "so noisy that they hardly had a single quiet meeting."

After her sharp encounter with Burrough, who expelled her from the meeting as "a goat rough and hairie," suitable for the "left side," Martha took another woman with her and went with complaints to Nayler. She demanded that he should openly defend her and criticise the leadership. Nayler, however, refused to agree with her complaints against his colleagues, and defended their attitude. Martha related afterwards that he was very short with her. Martha then broke out in uncontrolled sobbing, and exclaimed with passion and bitterness: "'I looked for Judgment, but behold a Cry!' And with that cried aloud in a passionate lamenting" Manner, which so entered and pierced poor James Nayler,

that it smote him down into so much Sorrow and Sadness, that he was much dejected in Spirit or disconsolate, Fears and Doubting then entered him, that he came to be clouded in his understanding, bewildered, and at a Loss in his Judgment," writes George Whitehead, the reliable editor of Nayler's writings.¹ "Darkness getting about him quick and sudden, his state was seen in the Light by friends in London before he was brought . . . to Bristol."²

Martha's criticism was intended not only for Burrough and Howgill but for Fox. And now she vented her wrath also upon Nayler. Her bitter complaint may have touched a sensitive spot in his subconscious or semi-conscious mind. She wished to awaken Nayler from his submissiveness and loyalty to "a glorious independence."

Exhausted in mind and body, Nayler burst into tears and fell into a state of deep melancholy, perhaps not unlike the condition in which he returned from the war. Thus he lay in despair and grief for three days. "His regard for the women prevented him from disowning their divided spirit," writes Braithwaite. While Nayler grew more apathetic, the "power rose" in Martha. She supposed herself to be interfering at the command of God, although impetuosity instead of serenity was driving her on.

After three days Nayler acknowledged to Martha that he had been unfair: he ought to have opposed injustice, but had let it pass. He stayed on for three days with the Simmonds. His depression was so intense that those who saw him could give no other explanation than that Martha had bewitched him, an accusation which necessarily carried weight in the seventeenth century.

Looking back on this period of his life, Nayler wrote afterwards: "And though in the Simplicity

¹ *Works*, p. ix.

² Geo. Bishop, *The Throne of Truth Exalted*, p. 4.

of Christ Jesus, I had given up my Body all along, a Free Offering to the Will of God . . . yet could I often feel that exalted One above, secretly tempting to Envy against the People of God . . . pretending a greater thing to come another Way.”¹

“Thus having in a great Measure lost my own Guide, and Darkness being come upon me, I sought a Place where I might have been alone, to weep and cry before the Lord that his Face I might find, and my Condition recover: But then my Adversary who had long waited his Opportunity had got in . . . so that I could not be hid, . . . and so letting go that little of the true Light which I had yet remaining in my self, I gave up myself wholly to be led by others, whose Work was then wholly to divide me from the Children of Light.”² “Thus was I led out from amongst the Children of Light and into the World, to be a Sign, where I was chased as a wandering Bird gone from her Nest, so was my Soul daily, and my Body from one Prison to another.”³

It was towards the end of July, and the atmosphere of London, polluted by evil-smelling cess-pools and stinking gutters, must have been intolerable to a man with weak lungs, and utterly worn out in mind and body.

From one of the letters that was found in Nayler's pocket at the trial we gather that he got no rest either day or night. The writer was Jane Woodcock, probably the daughter of William Woodcock, who owned one of the largest meeting-places in London close to the Old Savoy Palace: “When we had troubled thee in bringing our cases before thee in the day time, thou didst not think much to spend nights in the Lord's service, in writing forth the cause of the innocent, to the leading of poor souls out of darknesse into his marvelous light. At other

¹ *Works*, p. xxxii.

² *Ibid.*, p. xlii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xliii.

times clearing the Innocent against the opposition of Adversaries.”¹ A letter from R. Hill makes it clear that, although Nayler was well liked in the great world, his real friends were found among the humble and downtrodden. In his exhausted state, Nayler was unable to perceive either the complaints or his own heavy burden in a right proportion. Martha’s aggressively mothering strength bowled him over, homeless, friendless, and worn out as he was just then. She described naïvely how “the power arose in me, which I did not expect, seeing I knew he was in that condition.”² Herself an autocrat, she resisted Fox’s leadership with excessive zeal, thereby deepening Nayler’s secret wound. She tempted his ambition – giving it a more attractive name. She let him listen to prophecies of greater things, trying to awaken the sufferer to a glorious independence.

When his colleagues saw him after three days, they could hardly recognise him. “So they came and plucked him away from me,” says Martha. They “all set upon me, that I had bewitched him.”³ The power that had lived in him seemed to have vanished. His friends saw that all was not well with Nayler. He did not listen to their protestations, but was passive and forbidding. As a means of arousing him, they sent him to Bristol, where a meeting was to be held during St. James’s Fair. On the way, some of Nayler’s admirers seem to have behaved in a strange fashion, with singing and bowing.

People in the neighbourhood had long been wishing to hear the famous London speaker, but not a word passed his lips. It was evident that he must be ill. Towards the end of the meeting, Martha Simmonds suddenly appeared. As soon as she found

¹ Quoted by Farmer in *Sathan Inthron’d*, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

that Nayler had been "plucked away from her," she set off for Bristol to hinder the opposite section from influencing him.

When she saw the suffering man, who so strangely appealed both to her tender and to her fighting instincts, she pushed herself forward and knelt down before him. Nayler remained silent and apathetic, but the sweat began to trickle down his forehead. His friends led him into a neighbouring house. Nayler went without resistance, but Martha had to be held back forcibly. When she tried to break loose and follow Nayler, they flung her down the stairs – an account which according to some sources, seems to be exaggerated.

Nayler, however, was not allowed any privacy in Bristol. Seeing this, his friends persuaded him to travel to Launceston. Fox was most anxious that he should come. They must argue things out, cost what it may. Martha went back to London.

Two Quakers accompanied Nayler on the way. One of them was Bolton, a well-known London goldsmith. Howgill and a friend followed them at a distance. Howgill relates that Nayler "said little, but hee did one while weepe exceedingly soe wee returned and they rode on: wee were glad that hee wente."¹ "My dear J. N. is as one that is not," wrote his close friend from home, Richard Farnsworth.

He had gone into "the dark night of the soul," a greater darkness even than that which he had lived through five years earlier.

¹ A. R. B. Collection, 114.

FOX AND NAYLER ONCE MORE

“ Its hope is . . . to weary out all Exaltation and Cruelty.”¹

SINCE the early spring, Fox had suffered terribly in one of the worst prisons of seventeenth-century England. He was not completely isolated from the outer world, however, and now and again he got news from different parts of the country through visitors from far and near. Martha Simmonds proposed Nayler, in his absence, as leader of the London Friends. Fox was informed of this, but could not get full knowledge of what was happening. People's thoughts and wishes reached him in shreds and patches. He had heard of Nayler's popularity in the fashionable world, and of the criticism of the founders of the London Quaker community. He had also heard of some strange prophecies which he regarded as nonsense. He was full of anxiety for Nayler, and also full of wrath. He feared that this party spirit might undo much good work. Fox received many enthusiastic letters and many genuine offers of exchange so that he should be set free, but the authorities were not thereby softened towards him. Like a wing-clipped eagle he was enclosed in his cage, unable to intervene personally in the alarming position. He waited anxiously for Nayler; he must see him at any price.

The authorities began to feel apprehensive at the constant stream of pilgrims to Launceston. They moved Fox to the particularly gruesome hole called Doomsdale, and began to imprison the travellers,

¹ From Nayler's last words.

applying an old statute against rogues and vagabonds. Nayler and his companions were less than three miles' distance from Fox's prison and from the possibility of getting all misunderstandings cleared up. But just then something sinister happened: they were arrested by the local authorities and brought to Exeter as prisoners. One group of pilgrims after another was brought there in the late summer, between twenty and thirty Quakers all told, and these were herded together with thieves and murderers.

As Nayler obviously needed solitude, a Friend from the North of England succeeded in procuring a separate room for himself, Nayler, and one other where they lay "on straw, where pirates used to lie." The London Friends, whose meetings were constantly interrupted by the antagonists of Howgill and Burrough, received news of Nayler and Bolton. "He has now fasted for ten or eleven days."

We gather from the numerous letters from Exeter that James was a constant object of searching observation and well-meant advice. Margaret Fell was kept posted with news, and so was Fox, who sent Anne Downer with letters to Exeter. Their hearts were softened when confronted by the shadow of what had once been James Nayler. Fellow-prisoners wrote one letter after another to Margaret Fell, expressing their warm affection and concern for Nayler, and begging her not to believe all the evil that was said about him.

"J. N. is in prison there: he is much as he was; thus much I had in a letter from John Boulton: . . . that J. N. is soe farr as it appears to mee, still much alike as to the frame of spirit as hee was when wee parted, and hath beene in a faste this 10 or 11 dayes onely once he tooke a little wine, and for the most parte

he does night and day take watter in his mouth and put it out again.”¹

While the object of so many clumsy admonitions and so much helpless observation was lying silently in the straw, ravaged by mental distress, bad air, fastings, probably also by fever, Martha Simmonds’s practical affection had been busy.

The wife of Major-General Desborough was lying desperately ill. Desborough, like Nayler, had once been quarter-master, and was now commanding officer in Cornwall. His wife was a sister of Cromwell’s and Martha, who knew her personally, offered to nurse her. Her offer was accepted with gratitude, and the patient improved, at least for a time. All that Martha asked as a reward for nursing her day and night was an order for the release of James Nayler. It was granted to her, although weeks elapsed before the order, signed by the Protector, was put into force. Full of triumph, Martha set out for Launceston with Hannah Stranger, and this time the authorities did not use their power to arrest them. Singing in her exaltation, she entered the solitary dungeon in which the prisoner was kept out of reach of other visitors. She urged Fox to submit to Nayler in the same forceful language which Fox had used without discrimination to “professors and priests.” Martha spoke her mind to the prophet, harassed as he was by close confinement, deprivations, anxiety, and dirt. She told him that his heart was rotten and his leadership a sham.

Fox had been fighting in solitude with his anxiety for Nayler, who was entirely ignorant of Martha’s enterprise. He now took her to be an emissary from Nayler, a misconception which got so firmly rooted in his mind that he could not rid himself of it. The same unbending strength of character which made

¹ Swm. MSS., I. 12.

Fox such a reliable prop for others, hardened him now against his friend. Fox must have looked upon what was happening as a threat to the very existence of Quakerism. With him the cause weighed more than personal feelings. Big, heavy, muscular, and stricken with gout, he clenched his teeth and bore his pain, all the time taking what healthy nourishment he could get and keeping his sound practical sense. Nayler, on the other hand, was all nerves. His suffering consumed him; he fasted and got thinner and thinner. His natural chivalry prevented him from snubbing anybody, least of all a woman. Fox was not more deterred from speaking his mind by women than by men, and told Martha and Hannah quite plainly that he regarded them as "devils." But his usually impressive speech had lost its sting, and failed to overawe the two women. "One of them said, she had stopped Francis Howgill's mouth . . . & she came singing in my Face, inventing words, and Hanah boasted, & said, if they was Devills, make them to tremble," wrote Fox indignantly to Nayler. "Many did not expect that Thou wouldest have been an Incourager of such as doe cry agst y^e power & Life of Truth."

This agitated letter, which Fox wrote to Nayler after the visit from the two women, revealed how much the harsh experiences had told on him. To Nayler, however, the solitude in prison had at last begun to bring some healing. But at that moment Martha came direct from Fox to the prison in Exeter. A Friend who visited the prisoners in the middle of September wrote to Margaret Fell: "His [James Nayler] condition is pretty low and tender and deare, and tender love from my soul flowed forth to him. After a little time his heart was opened towards me and he led forth himself to me, but there came Martha Simmonds when I was there

and when at any time we were together she would have called him away and he was so much subject to her.”¹ Martha Simmonds and Hannah Stranger travelled with their husbands to Exeter, bringing the order for release. Martha stayed behind after her husband had left. Hannah Stranger wrote urging Nayler to let Martha see him, and her letter shows that Martha had friends who really valued her: “There is given to her much of excellent and innocent wisdom arisen and arising in her which will make all the honest hearted to praise the Lord alone, and no more set up self. . . . Her portion is exceeding large in the Lord . . . which rejoiceth my heart to see her walk so valliantly and faithfully in the work of the Lord, in this time of so great tryall, as hath been laid upon her.”²

Martha Simmonds had come into Nayler’s life like a whirlwind, and like a whirlwind she was to cause havoc. At first she came to complain of being ill-used. Later on she had mothered him and urged him on. Finally she took the lead. To throw an antagonist down the stairs and call her devil is not the best way to stifle opposition. In her emotional partisanship Martha grew still more convinced of being in the right. Her passionate nature worshipped that which was gentle and calm. Equally fanatic in wrath as in admiration, she did all she could to widen the gulf between the two leaders. It was probably due to her persuasiveness that Nayler wrote to Margaret Fell saying that Fox wanted to bury his name in order to exalt his own. A great deal of similar information was passed on to Fox in Launceston prison. There was no sign of his being set free, and he had been shut off from life and action for many months.

¹ Quoted from Brailsford, p. 108.

² R. Farmer, *Sathan Inthron’d*, pp. 7-8.

The letters going to Exeter were full of bitterness: "James! Thou must beare thy owne Burden, & thy Companyes with thee whose Iniquity doth increase & by thee is not cried agst: Thou hast satisfied y^e world, yea their Desires [w^{ch}] they looked for, & thou and thy Disciples, & y^e world is joyned [agst y^e] Truth, it is manifest through yo^r: wilfullness & stubbornnese, & this is y^e word of y^e Lord God to Thee. Martha Symonds w^{ch} is called yo^r Mother, she bid me bow downe, & said J was Lord, & king, & that my Heart was rotten, & shee said, shee denyed that w^{ch} was Head in me. . . . Many did not expect that Thou wouldest have been an Incourager of such as doe cry agst y^e power, & Life of Truth, but wouldest have been a Nourisher of Truth, and not have trained up a Company against it.

"And what is that w^{ch} doth fulfill y^e worlds Prophecy, & their Desires? Therefore consider, & search thy selfe; if this be Jnnocency. The Light of God in you all J owne, but this J Judge.

"GEORGE FOX."¹

The last lines referred undoubtedly to the mysterious expectations entertained by Nayler's flock of admirers, which were to result in such strange "signs" connected perhaps with their belief in "the advent of Christ in 1656."

The gulf was growing wider between these two friends and comrades, each shut up in a prison, filling its stagnant walled-in atmosphere with bitter thoughts and "secret smittings," as Nayler afterwards described it. In the meantime, Nayler was made the object of the most ecstatic worship from people who were living in apocalyptic expectations. In letters and in interviews he was mentioned as the right representative for the new kingdom, "King of

¹ Swm. MSS., iii., 193.

Israel and son of the Most High." Equally biblical and exaggerated words had been addressed to Fox. But the present situation was particularly dramatic and full of political unrest. Nayler was to be a "sign" of Christ's advent. Whereas Fox grew hard, Nayler turned eccentric. Their humours were so different. When he was restored to health, Nayler said that he was carried away by "wild actions."

Stung by Fox's rebuke, especially by the disparaging remark that Martha Simmonds should be called his "Mother," Nayler lived in an atmosphere that became more and more charged with ecstasy. The prison air was trying to all. One of the women died; another fell into a deep swoon, from which Nayler succeeded in reviving her. This was explained as a resurrection from the dead. The hysterical adulation increased, with songs and kneeling. The prison was like an asylum, and Nayler was swept off his feet by the fantastic ideas associated with his assertion of the right of free speech and his faith in the inner Christ, whose advent is along the road of humility and not of domination. His continuous fasting was in some way connected with the fasting and temptation in the wilderness.

When Fox was at last set free in September 1656, he went direct to Exeter and sent a request that Nayler should come out to see him. But Nayler did not respond to the order, and Fox did not go to find him. Next day was Sunday. The Friends had a meeting in the prison. Fox was leading. Nayler came in with some of his supporters. "And I saw hee & his company was wronge butt I did admonish y^m." ¹ But while Fox was praying and explaining that Nayler had turned away from the road, Nayler and several others kept their hats on in protest.

¹ *Journal*, i. 244.

And before the end of the meeting Nayler had disappeared in the middle of another admonition addressed to himself.

This hat demonstration wounded Fox deeply, and years afterwards the recollection of it roused his indignation. It prejudiced his future policy, magnifying the hat ceremonial out of all proportion. "They was ye first y^t gave y^t bad example amongst freindes,"¹ he wrote about Nayler and others on this occasion.

A letter written a fortnight later by Richard Hubberthorne gives a detailed account of this tragic prison drama: Fox was endeavouring to speak to Nayler in the strains of an aggrieved leader, painfully hurt by his mistake, and he had a healthy man's blind ignorance of the wounds his words might inflict on a bundle of nerves that had reached the utmost degree of sensitiveness. When the old genuine love for Fox occasionally welled up in Nayler, he expressed it in a puerile manner – being in a low mental state – which was disclaimed and made light of by Fox. Words, rebukes, and admonitions were poured over Nayler in order to make him well, although his condition was such that all this talking at the best conveyed nothing. And Fox, just escaped from his terrible prison experiences, full of bitterness and suspicion, was irritated by any sign of disrespect. It is pathetic to quote from Hubberthorne's letter, however unreasonable it would be to expect that robust seventeenth-century people should understand how to treat soul sickness. Eccentricity can never be cured by hardness.

Hubberthorne, one of the Friends from the North of England, had just had a long serious talk with Nayler.

"At that p̄sent time Geo: came into the prisson: after I had spoken when we ware siting silant: & he

¹ *Journal*, i. 244.

called of Jam: three or foure times, but he would not speake to him: Then he turned away and went out: Geo: spoke to me y^t if I was free to stay longer with them I might, & that he would come againe, & I stayed longer: & after a while I was moved to speake in tendernes to Ja: y^t he might see whom he now was subjecte unto & whom he Rejected and whether he did not know that those whom he now rejected and would not be subjecte unto nor answer as Geo: &^c had not as much of god in y^m to bee obayed as those whom he was subject unto, which if they bid him come or goe either up or downe he was subject: and after I had spokne as I was moved with love to him, Geo: came againe and spoke some words to them all, & wee passed out of y^e prison to y^e Inn: and a litle after Ja: came to the Inn: and he was brokne and tender and wept and said to Geo: that there was that which could never be seperated from him: & much love & tendernes was from Geo: to him: and he offered to give Geo: an Aple but he would not Receive it. And soe with some love & tender afections he parted from us at y^t time.

“Upon y^e same day we went in to the castle yard to wheare James was: & there Geo: had much communication with him of things. but Ja: stood to justifie him selfe in things which was reproved with the light but there did litle at y^t time breake out ag^t others.

“Upon y^e 3 day in y^e morning Geo: sent for James to come to him, hee havinge somethinge to speake privatly to him which he would not have spoken in publick but he would not come soe A litle after wee went to y^e prisson but he was passed out towards the castle yard, and soe was at y^e castle gate: & Geo: went up to him & we stayed in y^e street y^t they might be privat Geo: asked him why he would not come when he sent & asked him if he would now goe thither then he said y^t he had

tould the jalor y^t he would goe to y^e castle & had not tould him of goinge to the Inn: Then Geo: asked him if he would then goe with him to tell y^e jalor that he would goe to y^e Inn but he would not. Soe then Geo: spoke much to him in y^e street privatly, but in the end some thinge gott up in him ag^t Geo: & when Geo: was turninge a way from him he openly utered forth these words: take heed of lyinge & false accusings & severall in y^e street heard. both prisoners & others: but Geo: passed away & would not Reply openly:

“Then after wee weare passed away Geo: sent me to him againe & Edw: Piate went with me to ask him whearin he could charge him with lyinge or false accusinge: & I went to him and asked him: what was that lyinge & falce accusinge wh he soe publickely charged ag^t Geo: in y^e street: he said y^t he did not charge him with lying nor falce accusinge: then I tould him y^t he spoke to none else but him in pertickler. then he said y^t Geo: knew what he meant: and that it was lyes y^t he had received from in others and soe judged by them and then said y^t he did but Question those things then I said Ja: thou knowest y^t he hath questioned things from y^e repports but not judged things by the repports: Then I asking him why he could not come to Geo. when he sent to him in love: he answered: when he sent to me there was a love in me that would have carried me through fire and water to him, but yet I must not goe for I saw that if I went y^t was up in him y^t there would have been nothings but strife and contention and therefore I saw it better to fly from it, then I said unto him that which was contrary to the love y^t would have carried thee to him through fire and water and did cause the to fly was enmitie and if it was better to fly then it had been better to have fled then to have published it in y^e street then he said

what should he answer us anything for when I sought to catch him in my wisdom & sutility. Yet he confest that it had been better for him not to have spokne it. . . . Afterwards Geo: passed to him againe in to y^e prison, wheare he & some others with him was sitinge in a place wheare he lyes which is lower than y^e rest of y^e chamber & Geo: spoke much to him Ja: wept and proffessed a great love and againe ofered Geo: An Aple & said: If I have found faver in thy sight receive it: but he denyed it & said, If thou can say thou art moved of y^e lord to give me it. Ja: said: Would thou have me to lye¹: Then Ja: havinge Geo: by y^e hand, he asked him if he might kisse him. Geo: standinge above y^e low place would have drawne Ja: out to him but he would not come out: but Geo: standinge still could not bow downe to him at his askinge of him in y^t thinge which if he had come out he could have sufered him to have done it: Then Geo: gave him his hand to kisse but he would not: and then Geo: said unto him: it is my footte. So with some few more words wee passed away, and Geo: passed up againe to him before wee went out of y^e towne. . . .

“Geo: was at Bristoll upon the last first day. . . . there was a great meeting of friends this 7 day . . . Geo: is to have a generall meeting at Reding, & then passe to London . . .

“This Above mentioned concerning Ja: I thought good to mention unto thee y^t there by thou may beter understand his condition and the note which Geo: wrote unto him as for these things . . .

“Thy deare Bro:

R. Hubberthorne.²

Bristoll y^e 4 day 8 month:

¹ I understand this to be a humorous retort. Nayler did not speak in such solemn phrases as Fox. There is a sting from the previous discussion and yet a feeling that what had arisen is at bottom unessential.

² A long letter from Hubberthorne to Margaret Fell *re* Nayler, written from Bristol 4.8.1656. Gibson MSS., v. 93.

This dismal scene had no doubt a hidden meaning in the minds of the actors, owing to Martha's admonition to Fox in prison that he should unbend because of his imperiousness. Nayler, who had *not* sent Martha, was probably not so aware of this as was Fox. To Fox it must have been the worst insult he had ever experienced. Having always identified himself with the "seed," he had felt justified in showing wrath on God's behalf.

Let us hear two other witnesses of what then took place. After Nayler's death, Robert Rich published an open letter to Fox in which he said: "I have just cause to believe it was the same spirit that acted in thee (and others of thy friends) against James Nayler in the day of his visitation and tryal, when he was led by the spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil; for did not G. F. (during J. N's imprisonment in the West) come thither to him, accusing, threatening and condemning him as one departed from the truth, and that had lost his authority; also tempting him with fair speeches and promises, if he would bow down and be obedient to him: To all which threats and promises J. N. being silent and regardless, and G. F. thereby thinking he was cast under his subjection, helde forth thy hand for him to kiss as a testimony of thy favour to him, and of his obedience to thee; which he refusing to do, didst thou not immediately offer thy foot to him, saying, thou wert mistaken, it should have been thy foot and not thy hand. I appeal to thine own conscience, whether this Allegation be not true for I assure thee, I received it from J. N's own mouth, as I went with him from London to Bristol to receive his Crucifixion there. Doth not this manifest G. F. to have lost his guide, and that he is elevated above the fear of God and life and love. . . ."¹

¹ *Hidden Things*, p. 37.

As Robert Rich was the only one to whom Nayler, prompted by exceptional circumstances, imparted this incident, and as Rich was "disowned" by the Quakers, this prelude of later occurrences has probably been too much left on one side.

The other witness is George Fox himself. Where Hubberthorne tried to blunt the edge of the controversy, Fox sharpens it. He obeyed the Lord's behests! "And ye next day I spoake to Jam: Naylor againe & hee sleighted it & was dark & much out: neverthesse hee woulde have come & kist mee but I saide seeinge hee had turned against ye power of God Itt was my foote: & soe ye Lord God moved mee to sleight him & to sett ye power of God over him."¹

Without a trace of hesitation or prick of conscience Fox seems to have written down this account about twenty years later, probably *after* the letter from Robert Rich had been published.

Pain, anxiety, and wrath vibrate far more directly in the short letter to Nayler which Fox must have written just after their meeting: "James! Thou hadest Judged & writtine thy secrite & falce Letters against him thou shouldest not, thou shouldest not deale soe presumptuously ag^t y^e innocent & their after thou wouldest have Kist him when thou hadest done this. A Jnocencie & Justice is delivered from that & you all and thruth Jnocencie & Justice is sett A top of you all and this thou must read & owne."²

The situation might be explained in this way: Nayler, tormented by the quarrel with him whom he still loved deeply, in spite of all this gossiping and chattering, was overcome by the old affection for his "father." But the kiss came at the wrong moment for Fox. He took it as a Judas's kiss, a false and lying behaviour towards himself, whom Nayler

¹ *Journal*, i. 244.

² Swm. MSS., iii. 195.

through Martha's interference had treated so ill in prison; this at least was his way of explaining it afterwards. He was unable to respond swiftly enough, and they fell out of step. The pontifical afterthought of the "Lord's command" is far worse than the spontaneous anger of a man whose blood flowed more slowly than James Nayler's.

The moment was like a terrible nightmare. Fox's movement with his foot redoubled Nayler's personal and fundamental disillusion, and, deeply wounded, he broke out in bitter and desperate weeping. Fox "was sett a patterne of Patience," to quote his own words. But it was too late. Nayler was "past feeling." The first impression had been too deep with him also. He was deaf to all admonitions, emphatically denying that he had done wrong. Fox hardened again. He went straight to Bristol, calling meeting after meeting where, in his wrath on God's behalf, he warned Friends against James Nayler.

In a letter from Bristol on the very day that Fox arrived, we are accidentally told that on Fox's enquiry whether there was any mail to go westwards, he was given the following letter from Margaret Fell to James Nayler: "Since I have heard that thou would not be subject to him to whom all nations bow, it hath grieved my spirit. Thou hath confessed him to be thy father, and thy life bound up in him, and when he sent for thee and thou would not come to him, where was thy life then? Was thou not then banished from the father's house, as thou knows thou hath writ to me? . . . And when he bended his knees to the Most High God for the seed's sake, and thou would not bend, nor bow, nor join with him, how will thou answer this to Him who hath given him a name better than every name, to which every knee must bow? . . . I could lie down at thy feet that thou might trample upon me, for thy good; and so I know

would he whom thou hast resisted, though to the spirit that rebels it cannot be, for that is not one with the Father.”¹

The letter never reached Nayler. Fox opened it, thinking it was better not to give it to him, rather than that it should be taken from him in prison. It was found among Margaret Fell's papers. Perhaps the long letter from Hubberthorne was an explanation which Fox asked him to send to Mrs. Fell. The letter from Fox, however, which has previously been quoted, was sent by express messenger to Nayler. This indignant letter of condemnation was, by the irony of fate, to clear Fox from any trace of guilt in Nayler's undertakings. Several other letters followed, full of bitterness and wrath. The scene in Exeter prison re-echoed for years to come.

“AH JAMES

“I forbare judging thee openly untill I came to Exeter, though yo^r actions were judged, and when I was come thether, I sent for thee and thou wouldst not come to mee, though thou had not been wth mee outwardly, since I left thee at London, whereby prejudice and jealousie might have been stopped in thee, but thou appeared before mee, before I saw thy face, as a man come out of a clay pitt, whose garments was durty, and thou being stuborne, would not owne mee when I was moved to pray, but stood in y^e high nature; rebellious; and I saw thee at Exeter, a cloud of darkenesse would rise up ag^{te} mee, w^{ch} was entered into thee, & wickednesse I tould thee was growing to a mountaine w^{ch} would have betrayed the just. . . . And now James y^e darkenesse is entered into thy disciples vessells out of thee, & is poured abroad.”²

¹ Quoted from Braithwaite, p. 249.

² Markey MSS., 122.

While the letters from Fox hit out right and left, questioning whether Nayler had ever experienced Christ, Nayler received the most rapturous praise from other correspondents, who showered epithets from the Bible upon him. In search of a particular expression, they wrote down whole phrases and sentences. A man outstrips his wife in boundless eulogy when he writes: "Thy name shall be no more James Nayler, but Jesus." This offended Nayler so much that, without reading it to the end, he put the letter in his pocket, where it was found by his accusers, who used it as one of the worst indictments against him. Nayler seemed mute and lost in despair. He had once more experienced how brittle human infallibility really is.

He himself was also guilty of error. Had he not flung himself down in too violent self-surrender on the road of humility beyond his self-respect? A reaction set in. He wished to regain his "measure" and, recklessly, he turned in the opposite direction, towards self-assertion.

The two men who once stood eye to eye and, filled with joy and light, discovered the "seed of God" in one another, had now met in Hades and beheld each other's caricatures in the flame-lit outer darkness. Uneven rhythm could not there blend in spiritual harmony. They were walking out of step the path of tortured souls. Love and faith were turned into discord, pride, wrath, and bitterness.

Where one was hardening, the other began to disintegrate. Where one had his wound protected under the cover of common sense and authority, the other was exhibited before the world in his decrepitude, mercilessly abandoned as an outcast and a lunatic.

Something terrible had taken place. A night

frost had secretly nipped the budding shoots of the spirit. Imperceptibly, as things happen only in nature and in the hearts of men, George Fox, the Prophet, had become the undisputed leader of a sect.

“THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL”

INTRODUCTION TO A PASSION PLAY

“How it was with me at that Day many talk of, but few know.”¹

ON a Friday towards the end of October 1656, when the rain had poured down for days on end on the mud of the highways, a strange company wended its way towards Bristol.

In the middle rode a man who seemed altogether absent in mind. He rode on horseback with bent head, his broad-brimmed hat deep over his eyes, his hands folded and motionless.

Two women walked, one on each side of the horse, catching hold of the bridle and wading up to their knees in the mire. While the rain battered on their faces, the women went forward humming with a “buzzing melodious noise,” the meaning of which was difficult to distinguish. In front rode a bare-headed young farm labourer, and behind followed two riders, one of whom had a woman riding pillion behind him.

In this way they seem to have travelled mile after mile, and were now and again noticed. In the neighbourhood of Bristol a wanderer met the strange company. He could not refrain from advising the women to walk on the causeway instead of right in the deep mud. They took no notice of what he said, however, and plunged on, humming quietly. The

¹ James Nayler, 1660.

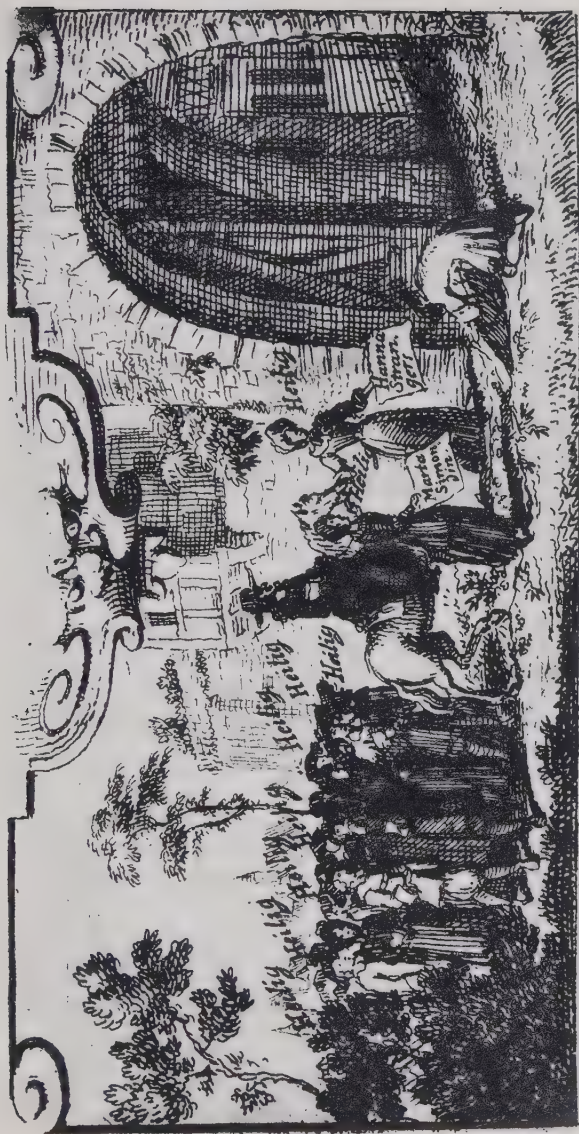
rider in the centre remained passive, without encouraging or realising that his companions were making him an object of adoration. As they came close to Redcliff Gate, on the south side of Bristol, they met other travellers, and closed their ranks. The women raised their voices to a jubilant cry: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Israel." They took off their dripping outer garments, spreading them in the dirt for the horse of the silent rider to pass over. For a moment he seemed to pull himself together, begging them not to do anything which the Lord had not prompted them to do.

After long weeks and months of illness, fasting, and mental conflict, James Nayler went on this strange ghostly ride from the prison. It is possible that, under the influence of Martha's ecstasy, he had consented to a "miracle play" of this kind, a "sign of repentance" that Christ was not to enter with arms or worldly power.

How different it would have been if Nayler had been himself, and had exhorted people to humility instead of high-handed domination. Had it been so, the performance would hardly have seemed more peculiar than all the other "signs" which were enacted to rouse men and women to penance. The actual performance would have been forgotten while the people listened to such words as these from Nayler's lips: "Did God ever ordain a Talk without Power and Life? Is not Christ the Ordinance?¹ . . . His Law in every Conscience shall answer to your Judgment . . . and so . . . every soul shall be subject, not only for Fear, but also for Conscience sake,² . . . Christ hath a War . . . against all the Powers of Darkness of this World, and all things of this old World, the ways and fashions of it will he overturn,

¹ *Works*, p. 216.

² *Ibid.*, p. 249.



JAMES NAYLER'S ENTRY INTO BRISTOL
From J. H. Feustking : *Gynecium Heretico Fanaticum*, 1704

and all things will he make new. . . .¹ Your Lord's coming in Peace, and not in Wrath.”²

Bristol had long been a Royalist rallying-point. Nayler was very likely present when Cromwell and Fairfax captured Bristol for “the new kingdom.” Only two years before the Quakers had met with violent opposition in the city, but since then they had won many adherents. “The Lord . . . rides on conquering in power and great glory,”³ as Burroughs expressed it. Twelve months earlier, Cromwell had razed the fort of Bristol to the ground, the same Cromwell who had now autocratically dissolved Parliament, to the bitter disappointment of the Levellers.

James Nayler may have been aware of these facts a few weeks earlier, but his recent experiences had so absorbed his thoughts that he rode into Bristol like one in a dream, an evil dream from which he did not seem able to wake up. He may have been informed that Fox had denounced him all over Bristol. Martha must have looked upon this “miracle play” as a triumphal entry. Her crude belief in “worldly prophecies” prompted her to show that there were some who still believed in Nayler and in another conception of power than that of Fox and Cromwell. It would be human enough if she had also imagined the Bristol Quakers seeing her whom they threw down the stairs entering in the suite of the spiritual conqueror.

The procession continued up to the High Cross and then along Broad Gate to the “White Hart,” an inn belonging to a prominent citizen who was also a Quaker. People crowded round the strange company. But none of the Friends came to meet Nayler, although a short time ago they had thronged

¹ *Works*, p. 391.

² *Ibid.*, p. 406.

³ *Letters of Early Friends*, pp. 41-2.

round him, eager to hear him speak. As a result of Fox's visit, Nayler was instead surrounded by utter loneliness. Even the weather was against him. The whole "sign" passed off like a farce while the rain was falling in torrents. Nayler's world, both outside and inside, was dark and unfriendly, like the storm-clouds racing across the leaden sky. The reaction against worldly domination seemed arrogance run amuck.

The travellers put up at the "White Hart." They tried to dry their clothes by the fire; wet through as they were, "they received it [the rain] at their necks and vented it at their hose and breeches." None of the Quakers came to see them, as was the custom, but presently armed police arrived at the inn, and the whole company was brought to the Town Hall to be examined: Nayler, John and Hannah Stranger, Martha, Dorcas Erbury, whom Nayler had revived from the swoon, and the men who had accompanied them from Exeter. It was not an unusual occurrence for Quakers to be imprisoned, but they generally had a fellow-Quaker with them, and there lived nowhere more influential Quakers than in Bristol. The owner of the "White Hart," who was counted as the "third man in the kingdom," had dealings with the authorities, and had often pleaded on behalf of his fellow-Christians. But he did not come this time. Not a single representative of the thousand Bristol Quakers was to be seen in the Town Hall. The authority of Fox had had its effect. "Friends are all kept and preserved, none are hurt,"¹ wrote one of their leaders quite contentedly to Margaret Fell.

Nayler was searched. He had been an officer in the army, and might be connected with the numerous plots and rebellions that were constantly hatched by soldiers and Levellers. He might possess

¹ G. Bishop, Swm. MSS., i. 188.

important political secrets. All his letters and papers were confiscated and later on published, with the exception of a note from Mrs. Fell, which was only casually mentioned. While the examination was in progress the women continued their singing, and one of them kissed the hand of the prisoner in front of the judge. Grave indictments were brought against Nayler, based on what *others* had done or said or written, and not on a *single act* which he had positively done himself, but only on what he had neglected to do. The Mayor and Aldermen of Bristol found him to be dangerous to the country. Many insurrections had been started in the name of religion. The political significance of the “sign” was emphasised by a letter which Martha had received from her husband. “My love is to thee and to I. N. and to I. S. and H. S. But this I could not but write to warn you that you stand single to the Lord and not believe every spirit. Your work is soon come to an end: part of the Army that fell at Burford was your figure. . . . Desburie’s wife is dead.”¹

Nayler had never before committed a fanatical action in performing a “sign.” Nor need he necessarily have lost his sanity because he had allowed the dramatic imagination of Martha and the other women to make him the central figure in this demonstration. It might have been the outcome of a fight to the death to give them the same initiative that he himself demanded against Fox. In its particular form the “sign” was foreign to Nayler, but it belonged undoubtedly to the sphere of ideas which to him, and to Calvert’s circle generally, was an antithesis to the gradual change of power into superior force. These burning political questions were probably more real to old soldiers, who had

¹ Farmer: *Sathan Inthron’d*, p. 21. (Burford was the place where Cromwell routed the Levellers.)

been in the thick of the fight and had believed with their whole soul in the cause for which they fought, than to others. It probably did not occur to Nayler that he, as the central figure of this "dream play," appeared far more arrogant than any of the others. He had not the same outlook on external proportions as Fox had. Overstraining his desire for humility, he allowed himself to follow the lead of more impulsive fellow-creatures. He said afterwards that nothing had been more repulsive to him, and we must believe him.

It is impossible to decide whether the adulation of the women, or his own subconscious desire for prestige, actually turned the scales. He had once in former years defended people of a mental type differing from his own, when they took part in one of these strange "signs," and gave then as a reason that they acted in obedience to their own will.

His processional entry, however, was commented on and explained in a peculiar way at a time when the vagaries of Bockhold and Knipperdolling were still remembered and afforded natural points of comparison. And yet the whole case was so utterly different.

A TRIAL¹

"And now all the trivial Circumstances are search'd into with Eagerness to form an Accusation," wrote one who was not a Quaker, "but a hearty Lover of Truth and Innocence wherever I see it."²

The old gossip related at the trial at Appleby four years earlier, and refuted by Nayler's wife, was again brought forward. Other compromising information was furnished and entered into the Report without any attempt at sifting the evidence. For instance, Nayler was said to have spent the night previous to his entry in Bristol in the same room as three women, and this was taken as proof of his lax morals. No reference was made to the fact that, as the inn was overcrowded, there were also four men in the room.

With "a sad down look, and melancholy countenance,"³ Nayler answered or remained silent while he was being cross-questioned.

"Question: Art not thou the man that rid on horseback into Bristol, a woman leading thy horse, and others singing before thee Holy, holy, holy, Hosannah, etc.

"Answer: I did ride into a Town, but what its name was I know not, and by the Spirit a woman was commanded to hold my horses bridle; and some there were that cast down cloathes, and sang praises to the Lord, such songs as the Lord put into their

¹ In order to avoid too much repetition and detail certain replies from the trial before the Parliamentary Committee have been grouped together with the answers given in Bristol.

² *Memoirs*, pp. xi, xiv.

³ *The Grand Impostor*, p. 44.

hearts; and it's like it might be the Song of Holy, holy, holy, etc.

"Q. Whether or no didst thou reprove those women?

"A. Nay, but I bad them take heed that they sang nothing but what they were moved to of the Lord."¹

"And being there asked whom they meant by the Word Holy, that they sang, he answered, That they that sang, were all of Age to answer for themselves."²

"And being also examined by the Commitee whether he reproved those that gave . . . him those Titles and Attributes, he would not say he had reproved them. . . . If they had it from the Lord, what am I that I should judge it?" answered Nayler; possibly with something of the wisdom of the serpent, but also in definite opposition to all outward dominion, of which his Soul was sick. "If the Father move them by his Spirit to give them to Christ I may not deny; if they give that to any other but Christ, I disown it."³

"And being asked, whether that Power were manifest in such a Manner in him as to raise Dorcas Erbury from the Dead, answered, I have said, I shall not satisfie in Words concerning the Thing further than only this . . . that wherein Dorcas Erbury, or any else do attribute unto me, as a Creature that hath Beginning and Ending, that I utterly deny. This may serve at one Word, for there cannot be a more abominable Thing than to take from the Creator, and give to the Creature the same Power which did raise from the Dead, which you read in the Scripture; the same Christ, the same anointing according to the Measure of him, is manifest in me, and not another."⁴

In his answers, Nayler often made use of stilted

¹ *The Grand Impostor*, pp. 5-6.

² *Memoirs*, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-8.

as well as biblical expressions. To a question whether he was the Son of God, he answered, like Fox, *Yes*; adding, however, that he had many brethren. "I do abhor that any of that Honour which is due to God, should be given to me as I am a Creature; but it pleased the Lord to set me up as a Sign of the Coming of the Righteous One; and what hath been done in my passing thro' the Towns, I was commanded by the Power of the Lord to suffer such things to be done to the outward as a Sign; I abhor any Honour as a Creature."¹

"Q. How dost thou provide for a livelyhood?

"A. As do the Lillies without care, being maintained by my father.

"Q. What estate hast thou?

"A. I take no care for that.

"Q. How long hast thou lived without any corporal sustenance, having perfect health?

"A. Some fifteen or sixteen days, sustained without any other food except the Word of God."²

This piece of information coincides with the reports from his friends in Exeter prison, and throws a strange light on Nayler's physical condition.

The Bristol magistrates had reported that Nayler is supposed to have said "If they had known the Father, they should have known him also. And Nayler, being examined by the Committee to this, whether that was his Answer at Bristol, he answered in these Words, Truly I can say little of That, whether I did say it or no; but if I did say it there, it is true; for if any one do know the Father, they shall know what I am, and where I live, and none can know my Life further than they know the Father; for the Father is my Life."³

The report goes on to say that Nayler "did assume the Gesture, Words, Honour, Worship and

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 40. ² *The Grand Impostor*, pp. 15-18. ³ *Memoirs*, pp. 24-5.

Miracles of our own blessed Saviour," an accusation which at the time might have been brought against countless numbers of his countrymen.

Only once the measured dignity of the prisoner was interrupted by a passionate outburst of anger. This happened when his old wound was probed – when he was questioned about the real unseen tragedy, of which the Bristol entry was only the outward and visible shadow performance.

All the letters and notes that Nayler carried in his pockets had been collected. One after another were read aloud in court, both the rapturous harangues from his admiring followers, and the wrathful note from Fox. Hannah Stranger had called him "The Fairest of Ten Thousand," Jane Woodcock "The Prophet of the Most High God." One, Richard Fairman, who was also in prison, addressed Nayler as "Son of Zion, whose mother is a Virgin and whose birth is immortal." It is easy to understand how this freemasonry as regards the new birth must have jarred on uninitiated ears. If the pockets of Fox had been searched during his last visit to Bristol, identical expressions would have been discovered which long afterwards were crossed over in pencil by the recipient. It is also easy to imagine how the biblical expressions of affection, borrowed by the women writers, must have stimulated those who were out to scent scandal.

Martha Simmonds was the person under particular suspicion. Another woman had written to her, calling her "bride" and "mother." Had Martha bewitched him? Nayler was asked. He answered no. Her entire evidence was then repeated to him – how, for instance, her words had "struck him down."

Worse still was Thomas Simmonds's first letter: "Thou King of Israell, Son of the Most high, arise, arise in thy mighty power. Shew thy

self a Lyon to thy enemies, and as a lamb to the innocent . . . The innocent doth cry come away.”¹ This may have been only a roundabout way of saying that they were waiting for the order of release to take effect at Exeter and hoped that Nayler would be acknowledged in “Israel.” There is a continuous hovering between quite commonplace facts and most exaggerated panegyrics. The bombastic utterances seemed to the writers the more justifiable and holy as they were taken direct from the Bible.

In his second letter to Nayler, Thomas Simmonds had sobered considerably. He had found that inspirations often originated in a dark earthly principle by which people were impelled without their knowledge: “Surely thou wast the chief leader in that action,” he wrote to his wife. When questioned whether she admitted her effusion, Hannah Stranger answered the magistrate out of the depth of her soul: “Yea, and my blood will maintain it,”² and this at a moment when her last words seemed to come very near the possibilities of actual experience. In spite of her extravagant way of speaking, the sentiments she voiced cannot have been superficial. In the same strain came Dorcas Erbury’s reply. She, who had been raised from the dead by him, would seal her writings with her blood.

Quite unconscious of the fact, Martha and Dorcas did their utmost to compromise their hero. In their summary acceptance of the doctrine of Immanence, Nayler became Jesus. Dorcas was positive that Nayler had raised her from the dead. By their ecstatic sympathy with the prisoner, their singing and other demonstrative tokens of affection, these women were to expose, caricature, and betray James Nayler. He was condemned on *their* behaviour, and

¹ Farmer: *Sathan Inthron’d*, p. 13. ² *The Grand Impostor*, p. 28.

not on his own. Their partisanship made an idol of him, and Nayler lacked the power to put a resolute stop to the whole performance. He could not help himself. He was far away in some strange land, and he may have remembered the woman with the precious ointment who was despised by others, but was not rebuked by the Master. He stiffened himself at the hearings of the court with the discipline of one who was used to give evidence, and only in the interludes did he retire into himself.

A witness in Bristol related that the women during the arrest had laid their heads on his knee and that Nayler had crossed his hands over their heads, while a moaning sound escaped him. Questioned about this, Nayler said that it might have been so, but that he had not noticed it, as he did not consider such things. When Martha was asked whether her fellow-believers had not accused her of incontinence, she answered: "Not carnally, but spiritually." A clergyman wanted to read before the magistrate in Bristol a letter addressed to him which insinuated that Mrs. Roper had had a child by Nayler. This was refused by the magistrate. The reverend gentleman, a Mr. Deacon, then began to cross-question Nayler on this point, but Nayler did not answer him. "If he could have defended himself, he would of course have done so," exclaimed Mr. Deacon, delighted. It had evidently not dawned on him that Nayler's dignity forbade him to answer at all.

Among the letters read was also one from Fox, quoted above. It was read out to the accused sentence by sentence. Some of the things he acknowledged, others he denied. Fox had written, "This is the Lord's words to thee." *This* Nayler refuted. Then followed the question about Martha Simmonds. "Wherefore didst thou call Martha Simmonds Mother, as George Fox affirms?" it was

asked, and no doubt a spicy retort was expected. At that question a sudden passion burst like a volcanic eruption from Nayler's tortured soul: "George Fox is a lyer and a firebrand of hell: for neither I nor any with me called her so."¹ This wrath and bitterness against Fox, to which no judge could take exception, seemed later on, when Nayler saw it all more in perspective, to be the only thing in which he felt that he had erred.

All the rest – the ghostly, overwrought spectacle which was to bring such terrible judgment on the accused, and for which he took all the blame – seemed to him so foreign to himself as never to have happened. "Nayler's fall," as it was generally called, was a fantastic performance of Chinese shades, whereas the real drama was enacted, unseen by spectators, in the soul of one who had lost his mental balance. It was a dance of demons in the sign of inordinate pride round a lonely sufferer who had lost his faith in the man he had respected above all other men, and before whose feet he had once laid down all that he had. "My father, my father," had Nayler once called Fox, whom he now regarded as a liar, and who a few days earlier had ostracised him and surrounded him with suspicion and animosity. As Nayler said to Robert Rich, his friends had wounded him far worse than his enemies. "The Magistrates told James of our denying him," wrote George Bishop to Margaret Fell.²

One of Nayler's companions had, possibly unknown to him, a "Description of our Saviour by Publius Lentulus to the Senate of Rome in writing . . . and for Nailer's Hair both Colour and manner of wearing it, as also the Fashion of his Beard, and Feature, and Person did much agree with that Description, which also was taken Notice of by

¹ *The Grand Impostor*, p. 19.

² *Nayleriana*, p. 25.

many of the Committee how much he resembled (as they apprehended, with some Affectation) the Picture usually drawn for our Saviour.”¹

After all their cross-questioning, the magistrates of Bristol were of opinion that it had been proved that “James Nayler did assume the Gesture, Words, Honour, Worship and Miracles of our blessed Saviour, and the Names and incommunicable Attributes and Titles of our blessed Saviour.”

The news spread rapidly. A letter-writer supposed that it was no news that Nayler had posed as Messiah and brought with him twelve apostles and two harlots. On the 5th of December, 1656, the booksellers published a pamphlet by R. Farmer, a Bristol preacher, who had always come off second best in his disputes with Nayler. It had the savoury title *Sathan Inthron'd in his Chair of Pestilence*.

The Rev. W. Grigge, who led the enquiry in Bristol and was called before Parliament, was not in such a hurry. He allowed the storm to die down before he printed his documents. Farmer and another theological expert, J. Deacon, were more zealous and diligent. Farmer styled himself on the title-page of his pamphlet—in opposition to the Quaker belief in a living Christ—“the servant of that Christ who was crucified in Jerusalem more than sixteen hundred years ago.” On the same page he then gives a brief summary of the contents, which will show how James Nayler and George Fox, the two Quaker leaders, “at daggers drawn discovers their cheat of being both led by an infallible Spirit.” The moral of his writing is that it is dangerous to listen to dreams and imaginations. He had no misgivings as to the opposite danger of listening only to tradition and inherited ritual.

It is curious to note how Farmer, in spite of it all,

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 24.

had a certain amount of sympathy with Nayler: "And truly if those high testimonies of those infallible Saints (before exprest) be true, *James* is as good, yea a better then either of the *Georges*, *Fox* or *Bishopp*; and I could have brought other testimonies for him. Among others, *Judge Fells wife* (and such discerning folkes cannot easily be mistaken) who in a Letter to *James* written from *Swarthmore* . . . subscribes her selfe *his Sister in the Eternalls*, *never to be forgotten*."¹

He quotes also a letter from John Audland, who, according to Martha, "was more gentle than the rest," and "it may be that the two baggages, Martha and Hannah, have bewitched James, and the Spirit left him, because he would not be ruled by the Georges." In the pamphlets, at any rate, Nayler was figuring as "the most important of all Quakers," "the chief of the Quakers," "a most eminent Ringleader and Head of that Faction,"² "the grand Quaker of England," and so on. It was pointed out by several authors how not only Richard Baxter, the most ardent enemy of the Quakers, but also Parliament at that time failed to take George Fox into account. It was believed that in securing Nayler, "the chief leader," Parliament would have the chance of stamping out the whole movement. Truly a strange epitaph for one who, in the hour of darkness, had complained that he had been put in the shade by Fox! "The foremost of all Quakers" – that, according to *Historia fanaticorum*, was James Nayler, arrayed in a fool's cloak and accused of a multiplicity of lies and crimes.

¹ Farmer: *Sathan Inthron'd*, p. 31. Farmer makes a great distinction between persons of social position and other people. He does not publish the letters from Margaret Fell, nor does he think that it was "suitable to mention" what share Major-General Desborough had in Nayler's release from Exeter.

² Grigge: *The Quaker's Jesus*, p. 35.

“THE JAMES NAYLER PARLIAMENT”¹

SOME weeks after the solemn opening of Parliament in September 1656, the Mayor and Aldermen of Bristol had sent up a report of a recent happening which was so fraught with danger to the State and the Church that their only resource was to appeal to Parliament. Our Lord's entry to Jerusalem had been enacted in their city, not in jest, but in the earnest hope of Christ's advent on English soil.

Parliament appointed a committee of fifty-five people to investigate this treasonable offence against the glory of God. Nayler gave the following explanation before this committee: “I do abhor that any honour due to God should be given to me, as I am a creature. But it pleased the Lord to set me up as a sign of the coming of the Righteous One, and what has been done as I passed through these towns, I was commanded by the Lord to suffer such things to be done by me, as to the outward, as a sign, not as I am a creature.”²

It was not long since a number of the present members had set themselves up as judges of Charles Stuart. On that occasion the nation had asserted its rights against the king. Now a still more important task was presented to a sanctimonious Parliament.

According to Mr. Downing, a leading politician who always trimmed his sails to every wind, Parliament had never been faced with a question of

¹ Carlyle's *Cromwell*, vol. iv.

² *Diary of Thomas Burton*, vol. i., p. 11.

greater importance. "All the eyes of the nation are upon you," said another. "This whole matter touches the safety of the nations. This is sent to test us. Christ is the king of this people – and of all peoples – and we must vindicate the honour of our king," said Major-General Goffe, the same who had been told by a heavenly voice that Charles I ought to be beheaded.

On the 5th day of December, 1656, the committee presented their report to Parliament in full session. The members, who had previously been edified by the early morning service, were given the following main points as guidance in their judgment of the accused:

James Nayler was born in Wakefield; had served in the army nine years, when he was invalided home; had been excommunicated from his parish church on the ground of blasphemy and suspicion of loose conduct with a Mrs. Roper; had been caught as a vagabond in Cornwall, where he had both in theory and in practice adhered to the principle of free intercourse with women. It was perhaps not surprising that he, after leading such a life, had assumed the gestures, words, and attributes of our Saviour.

Some members actually urged that evidence should be heard in Parliament, especially as the witnesses before the committee had not been sworn. But the majority found that, after such blasphemy, there was no further need of witness.

For eleven days Parliament revelled in indignation and in quotations from the Bible. We find a curious mixture of heathen Teutonic religion of honour, Calvinistic logic, Puritan godliness, apprehensiveness of religious liberty introduced as a result of the Civil War, anger with the Quakers, legal hair-splitting, and great consternation because



THE GREAT SEAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH, 1651
From a sulphur cast in the Department of MSS., British Museum.

there was no precedent to follow. The law according to Moses and St. Paul, the Canonical laws and the “Bill of Attainder,” were all in turn resorted to. The discussion swayed backwards and forwards. They who were not indignant on God’s behalf were annoyed because the trial took so much time. No wonder that the nervous and exhausted speaker laid strong emphasis on the accusation that Nayler had overworked Parliament. Here are some rhetorical specimens from the debate:

“Many opinions are in this nation (all contrary to the government) which would join in one to destroy you, if it should please God to deliver the sword into their hands. Should not we be as jealous of God’s honour, as we are of our own? Do not the very heathens assert the honour of their Gods, and shall we suffer our Lord Jesus thus to be abused and trampled upon? . . . My conscience would fly in my face, if I should be silent. . . . For my part, I am of opinion, that it is horrid blasphemy, and ought to be punished as blasphemy; and you ought not to let it slip through your fingers without due punishment.” The speaker was Major-General Skippon, who spoke only on very rare occasions. He was an old officer, and one of the king’s judges.

Somebody else pointed out that “by the Mosaic law blasphemers were to be stoned to death. . . . If we vindicate not the name of Christ in this, he will vindicate himself.”

“I shall not delay your judgment upon this vile wretch; but God would have us proceed in a just way, though against the vilest person. . . . That which sticks with me is, whether there is a witness against him at all; not one against him upon oath.”¹

Before the tedious discussions of the day were over, Major-General Lambert rose to speak. He

¹ Burton, i. 25-30.

had been the driving force behind the "Instrument," the law of religious freedom of 1653. It was also he who, more than others, had been responsible for placing the executive power in Cromwell's hands, and who now, convinced republican as he was, opposed the suggestion of making Cromwell king. He had probably had more to do with Nayler than any of the other members of Parliament.

"It is matter of sadness to many men's hearts, and sadness also to mine, especially in regard of his relation sometime to me. He was two years my quarter-master, and a very useful person. We parted with him with great regret.

"He was a man of a very unblameable life and conversation, a member of a very sweet society of an independent church. How he comes (by pride or otherwise) to be puffed up to this opinion I cannot determine. But this may be a warning to us all, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. . . .

"I confess I did not think the business to be of this nature, though I heard much rumour of it abroad. It is very much sorrow of my heart, and I hope nothing shall quench my zeal against it; but I would have it regular."¹

The subject of these debates, together with four of his companions, was lodged and guarded in an inn quite near the Houses of Parliament, so that he should be easily accessible. The two women continued their extravagant demonstrations of affection. Nayler suffered it with blank despondency, but once, when Dorcas Erbury kissed his feet, he got up and began to walk about. Visitors came and went, friends, enemies, and newsmongers. When the good kind Sarah Blackbury entered, greeting him with Solomon's words: "Rise up, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come away! Wherefore sittest

¹ Burton, i. 33.

thou among the pots?” her attempt at cheering Nayler must have failed to rouse any sympathetic response.

On the 6th of December, Nayler was to be brought before Parliament. Immediately beforehand the legal difficulties of the trial were brought home to his judges. The new constitution allowed religious freedom without the restriction of a Blasphemy Act, but insisted that certain extraordinary cases should be referred to the Protector. This had a delicate and acute bearing on the adjustment of power between Cromwell and Parliament. Parliament was supposed to have power to create whatever legal forms it chose, without being hindered by formalities. The committee had been appointed by Parliament, and their examination could be accepted without further ado. Captain Baynes, who stood close to Lambert, remonstrated: “However others look upon Nayler, I look upon him as a man, an Englishman. I would have him so tried as to bring in a bill of attainder against him, or leave him to the law.”¹ The criminal was, however, brought in. James Nayler stood erect behind the bar. He refused to kneel. A serjeant was ordered to take off his hat.

The report of the committee was read. When it came to the point regarding Mrs. Roper, Nayler denied the truth of it. “It might be,” said he, “she kissed me. It was our manner; but when I found their extravagancies I left them. All that knew me, in the army and elsewhere, will say I was never guilty of lewdness; or so reputed. I abhor filthiness. See if any can accuse.”²

Nayler would answer when he was questioned: “It may be: it was: very like it may be so”; he did not quite remember the words. “I hope you have so much justice and charity as not to wrest

¹ Burton, i. 44.

² Ibid., i. 46.

my words," he answered to another question. "God set up this vessel as a sign of his coming, but not limited in this vessel, though it is thence that the hope of Israel springs."

"Q. Why did you ride into Bristol in that manner?"

"A. There was never any thing since I was born so much against my will and mind as this thing, to be set up as a sign in my going into these towns; for I knew that I should lay down my life for it.

"Q. Whose will was it, if not yours?"

"A. It was the Lord's will, to give it into me to suffer such things to be done in me; and I durst not resist it, though I was sure to lay down my life for it.

"Q. How were you sure?"

"A. It was so revealed to me of my father, and I am willing to obey his will in this thing.

"Mr. Speaker. A sign is not only set up to direct the [MS. unintelligible] – to his own, but to direct others.

"A. True, such as will turn to Christ, by this sign to repentance, Christ is come to them: haply some are not able to bear this.

"Q. Are there any more signs than yours?"

"A. I know of no other sign. There may be other signs in some parts of the nation; but I am set up as a sign to this nation, to bear witness of his coming. . . .

"Mr. Speaker. Christ came long since, and you say he is but now come in the flesh.

"A. It is well for those that can witness him long since come in the flesh. It is but of late he is come to me; but I say he is again come in the flesh and he is daily manifested in the flesh; though none can bear it.¹

¹ After his conversion, Nayler had vindicated inner obedience in opposition to *Imitatio*. But he had nevertheless been deeply dependent on Fox. It is against this that he has now risen up in defiance and later on in hard-won liberty.

“As to those words of the woman, Arise, my love, my dove, my fairest one, why stayest thou amongst the pots? I own it is no other way than as it was spoken in the Canticles, of Christ’s Church.

“I am one that daily prays that magistracy may be established in this nation. I do not, nor dare affront authority. I do it not to set up idolatry, but to obey the will of my Father, which I dare not deny. I was set up as a sign to summon this nation, and to convince them of Christ’s coming. The fullness of Christ’s coming is not yet, but he is come now.”¹

Nayler was now removed from the hall.

Major-General Skippon: “. . . He hath confessed enough to vindicate the Committee. . . . These Quakers, Ranters, Levellers, Socinians, and all sorts, bolster themselves under thirty-seven and thirty-eight of Government² which, at one breath, repeals all the acts and ordinances against them. . . . If this be liberty, God deliver me from such liberty.”³

Other voices were heard, expressing dismay “that such indignity to Christ should be done, sitting a Parliament that professes so highly to the interest of Jesus Christ. Do we not undertake his cause, to manage it against Spain, where his name is blasphemed, and shall we suffer him to be blasphemed at home? . . . You have now hell groaning under expectation of this issue, what you will do in this business. I would have us put on courage; and let not the enemies of God have the upper hand, to have liberty to blaspheme his name. It is the cause of God, and ought not to be slighted.”⁴

It was finally decided “to agree with the Committee in the Report” without further hearing of witnesses.

¹ Burton, i. 46–8.

³ Ibid., i. 50.

² *The Instrument of Government*.

⁴ Ibid., i. 51.

The proceedings of Monday, the 8th of December, ended by describing Nayler's crime not only as blasphemy, but as *horrid blasphemy*. On this day quotations touching on blasphemy abounded, both from Leviticus and from the New Testament.

"You have here before you the greatest matter that ever came before a Parliament," declared Dr. Clarges. "This impostor hath not only poisoned himself, but too many others. . . . Let us all stop our ears, and stone him – for he is guilty of horrid blasphemy: nothing is so apparent."¹

Somebody here and there pointed out that Nayler's companions had been the real blasphemers, for they had given him undue honour. But this reminder met with no sympathy. Others suggested that Nayler should be called rebel instead of blasphemer, and therefore be tried in the usual manner before a Court of Law. Mr. Downing, however, would not be satisfied with anything less than "horrid blasphemy." It is quite possible that Downing had met Quarter-master Nayler before. He had been Scout-Master-General in Cromwell's army in Scotland, and improved his social position by marrying a lady of means. Before long he was to use equally strong language against the regicides with whom he was now associated and to be created a baronet by Charles II.

"God could have made him a pillar of salt immediately, if he had pleased; have struck him dead, but he has left it to you to vindicate his honour and glory. Now see what you will do. This is the day of temptation, and trial of your zeal."²

After lengthy expostulations like these from Mr. Downing, the aged Lord President Lawrence spoke: "This gentleman has spoken very zealously, yet

¹ Burton, i. 74-5.

² Ibid., i. 61.

they were honest men, too, that called for fire from heaven, and we know how they were reprovèd. I have lived some time in the world, and seen what is abroad, and how careful wise men have been in proceeding in this kind. I wonder why any man should be so amazed at this. Is not God in every horse, in every stone, in every creature. . . . If you hang every man that says, Christ is in you the hope of glory, you will hang a good many. . . . I do not believe that James Nayler thinks himself to be the only Christ; but that Christ is in him in the highest measure. This, I confess, is sad. But if, from hence, you go about to adjudge it, or call it blasphemy, I am not satisfied in it.”¹ In vain it was urged by Colonel Holland: “Consider the state of this nation, what the price of our blood is. Liberty of conscience, the *Instrument*, gives it us. We remember how many Christians were formerly martyred under this notion of blasphemy; and who can define what it is. I am wholly against the question.”²

The heated controversy ended in the decision that Nayler “was guilty of horrid blasphemy, and was a grand impostor, and seducer of the people.” One member advocated piously that Nayler should be visited by the clergy with a view to conversion. The six following days the discussion centred round the justification for capital punishment. Richard Cromwell, whose opinion was that Nayler should be hanged, gave a sumptuous dinner to members of Parliament, which was a welcome interlude.

The most energetic speaker in Nayler’s defence was Colonel Sydenham. He had been a member of the Government and had had a share in setting up the protectorate. Unlike Mr. Downing, however, he stuck to his convictions, or, rather, he had a conviction and suffered for it.

¹ Burton, i. 62.

² *Ibid.*, i. 78.

"If Nayler be a blasphemer," said Colonel Sydenham, "all the generation of them¹ are so, and he and all the rest must undergo the same punishment. The opinions they hold, do border so near a glorious truth, that I cannot pass my judgment that it is blasphemy. I shall choose rather to live in another nation, than where a man shall be condemned for an offence done, by a subsequent law. I am against the Bill of Attainder."²

"Was not the king justly condemned," interposed a clever lawyer. ". . . Our laws make it death for robbing a man, though he take but 12^d. . . . Yet we make nothing of robbing God of his glory. My Motion is . . . if you have no other punishment, that you would fill up the blank with the old way of punishment, that he may be stoned to death."³ A merciful wit found a way to turn the bloodthirsty: Had not Nayler foretold his death! What an excellent opportunity of proving him to be a liar! Mr. Bampffield, who had been a member of the previous pious Parliament (1654), was able, however, to prove from Holy Writ that capital punishment must be the absolute will of God. "The example of our Saviour's suffering is drawn thus. If he had not been really Christ, then had the Jews done justly in crucifying of him. For the Spirit of God holds this forth plainly, that the charge laid against him was, that he, being a man, called himself God. And was this offence of Nayler's less than calling himself God. . . . If this be not blasphemy, then there is no blasphemy in the world."⁴

That the question of blasphemy was again brought up was due, at least partly, to the fact that the honourable members, one day as they came from morning service, were accosted at the door by

¹ The Quakers.

² Burton, i. 86.

³ Ibid., i. 87.

⁴ Ibid., i. 91.

Robert Rich, the well-to-do London merchant, who persisted in handing them petitions, in which he offered to come and prove that Nayler was not guilty of blasphemy. Several voices were heard in favour of a more lenient punishment, such as flogging, imprisonment, pulling out his tongue, and so on. “If you cut out his tongue, he may write, for he writes all their books. If you cut off his right hand, he may write with his left.”¹ It was common knowledge that Lilburne had sent out pamphlets from prison, in spite of all restrictions.

Major-General Whalley, one of those who judged the king, advised capital punishment also on this occasion: “If men will commit unheard-of sins, is it not just that they suffer by an unheard-of law and punishment? Else it may be said, we want a law. . . . Must we undertake to pardon sins and imitate God in this? . . . It is true we ought to love one another, but not so as to exclude our love to God. Have we not as well the example of Ananias and Saphira’s being put to death. God has made a law to punish blasphemy, and what are we poor worms going about to repeal that law. Where do we find it repealed.”²

It was again pointed out that the Law of Moses was as binding as ever, and the greatest thing in the world was God’s honour. Others tried to revive a law from Henry IV’s reign, but were met by the rejoinder that according to this law all English Protestants were heretics, and worthy to be condemned to death.

There was occasionally a great deal of impatience to get to the end of these debates, which took the whole mornings and afternoons and entailed extra lighting: “Lest you kill yourselves by voting by what death he shall die, I would have you adjourn

¹ Burton, i. 98.

² Ibid., i. 102-3.

till to-morrow morning," suggested Desborough. "Truly I am not able to sit out these long debates, forenoon and afternoon. But, if it be your pleasure, I shall be willing to spend my life in your service," complained the Speaker.¹

But there were plenty of those who were not tired. "The love of Christ constrains us." "If we have love to Christ we cannot suffer Him to be dishonoured."

After a fresh orgy of Bible quotations from the Law and the Prophets and the New Testament, Mr. Downing interposed: "If you should come to make prophesies the ground of a law . . . we shall fall into James Nayler's principles, to act by our own light within us. *I tremble to make this a rule for our proceedings.*"² He who, like Mr. Downing, allowed himself to be guided by the changes in the political world, had indeed a safe rule of conduct.

Personal remarks, witticisms, and *bons mots* throw sudden sparks into this hopeless jumble of pious and arrogant repartee. But it is not easy to appreciate them without intimate knowledge of these highly important, indignant, satirical, or sorrowful Roundheads, whose words whizzed like arrows, clubs, or explosives across the hall.

The rejoinders of Nayler's friends were a special feature sorted out according to the appetite of the majority. Among these were Sir Gilbert Pickering, who at last found his words of deliverance: "He is bewitched, really bewitched. . . . Either be strict in this or you do nothing, for certainly this of *Quakerism* is as infectious as the plague. And that not only men, but women be kept from him. I have told you it is a woman that has done all the mischief."³ Another was Colonel Shapcot, who wanted to have Nayler removed to Yorkshire, whence he

¹ Burton, i. 104.

² Ibid., i. 144. Author's italics.

³ Ibid., i. 153, 155.

came. “Those that come out of the North are the greatest pests of the nation. The Diggers came thence.” Feelings of local patriotism now began to run high, and members were not slow to despatch each other to all sorts of remote places, even to the “Isle of Dogs,” where more than one wished the whole affair.

At last, on the 16th of December, a decision was made. Capital punishment was rejected by 96 votes against 82. But the sentence included nearly all the other suggestions that had been put forward.

“Resolved that James Nayler be set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, in the New Palace Westminster, during the space of two hours, on Thursday next, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets of Westminster to the Old Exchange, London; and there, likewise, to be set upon the pillory, with his head in the pillory, for the space of two hours, between the hours of eleven and one, on Saturday next; in each of the said places, wearing a paper containing an inscription of his crimes; and that at the Old Exchange, his tongue shall be bored through with a hot iron, and that he be there also stigmatized in the forehead with the letter B.; and that he be, afterwards, sent to Bristol and conveyed into and through the said city, on a horse bare ridged, with his face back, and there also publicly whipped, the next market-day after he comes thither: and that from thence he be committed to prison in Bridewell, London, and there restrained from the society of all people, and kept to hard labour till he be released by the Parliament: and, during that time, be debarred of the use of pen, ink, and paper, and have no relief but what he earns by his daily labour.

“Resolved, that the said James Nayler be brought

to the bar to-morrow, at ten of the clock to receive his judgment.”¹

Large numbers of petitions had poured in, both for and against Nayler. It was decided not to take any notice of them until judgment had been pronounced.

This was to take place on Wednesday, the 17th of December. There was great consternation as to procedure. The Speaker, utterly worn out by this time, enquired anxiously: “What shall I say to him? Shall I ask him any questions? Or if he speak, what shall I answer? Shall I barely pronounce the sentence, and make no preamble to it? I can do nothing but by your directions. I pray you inform me.”²

When the prisoner was brought before the bar, the Speaker addressed to him the following acrimonious speech: “Now ten or eleven days have been spent in debating your crimes, which are heinous. You have troubled the counties up and down, and now you have troubled the Parliament. Yet in your sentence, mercy is mixed with judgment. It is a sentence, not of death. They desire your reformation rather than destruction.”³

Two or three times James Nayler wished to be allowed to speak in order to find out in what his crime consisted. The Speaker answered brutally, that he ought to be able to understand this from his sentence. When judgment had been pronounced, Nayler said as he was brought out: “God has given me a body; He will, I hope, give me a spirit to endure it. The Lord lay not these things to your charge. I shall pray heartily that He may not.”⁴

It is not without interest to compare another episode which took place on the same day as

¹ Burton, i. 158.

² Ibid., i. 161.

³ Ibid., i. 166.

⁴ Ibid., i. 167.

judgment was pronounced on Nayler. A soldier, James Noble, was accused of embezzlement of public funds. During the trial he began to abuse “six knaves” who were allowed to sit in Parliament although they had appropriated far more public money than he had done.¹

Mr. Bampffield: “Ask him who are the six knaves; haply he may mean some of us.” The remark had probably some reference to Mr. Bampffield.

Another speaker: “This is a very high crime, and we ought to vindicate ourselves from this aspersion.”

Another: “I never knew such an affront offered.”

Several began to defend themselves; they were not knaves.

Major-General Desborough, not without a sting: “These gentlemen need not to vindicate themselves. We know their innocence.”

Sir John Reynolds: “This is *civil blasphemy*,² and you know not what debate it may beget.” After some discussion it was decided “that: these words were scandalous.”

The accused, however, knelt down, and remained kneeling humbly before the honourable gentlemen, calling himself “a poor mad creature.”

“He has been a *soldier*,” several people were heard to say as he was brought away, “and it is not proper to whip him. The word Noble speaks his privilege. He is a Roman,” etc. Nobody had remembered that Nayler had been both soldier and quarter-master when he was sentenced to flogging!

Two days later Noble petitioned humbly to be set free. He promised to be a new man. There was time to read *his* petition, and expressions of rejoicing that he was going to be converted from his evil ways.

Noble was set free from prison, but Nayler had to suffer the full rigour of a lawless sentence.

¹ Burton, i. 148 ff.

² Author's italics.

NAYLER, CROMWELL, AND THE CROWN¹

THE dramatic episode on the way to Bristol, the "sign of penance" into which Nayler had let himself be drawn, was not only like an unfinished scene from an old miracle play. It had also, as the magistrates of Bristol rightly appreciated, a serious purport. It was to be a contrast to all visible authority and outward show, which had also entered the Protectorate. But the actors lost the proportions of the play, just as they lost a sense of proportion when quoting passages from the Bible in their letters.

As early as 1649, even before the death of the king, the Levellers had feared that fresh usurpers of power would undermine democracy. A pamphlet, "printed in a Corner of Freedome," had warned the Government, which had already begun to don the traditions and paraphernalia of an old established Court: "Yet this is not our new intended king, there is a king to succeed: this is but his viceroy. O *Cromwell!* whither art thou aspiring? The word is already given out amongst their officers, 'that this nation must have one prime ruler, or magistrate, over them,' and, 'that the General hath power to make a law to bind all the Commons of England.' This was most daringly and desperately avowed at *Whitehall*, and to this temper the court-officers are now a-moulding: he that runs may read, and foresee the intent: a new regality!"²

¹ Although this chapter in some respects anticipates the future, it is placed here on account of the context.

² Burton, i. 49.

Since that time further steps had been taken in the same direction. Recently, Sir Harry Vane had not only publicly announced his view as to the deviation from the object of the fight, but also placed an article in Cromwell's own hands, which was to lead him to his duty, and which led Sir Harry Vane to prison.

It is interesting to discover what a sublimating rôle Nayler's trial was to play as regards Cromwell and the Crown.

On the morning that Nayler was whipped through the streets, Parliament was pestered with petitions on behalf of Quakers generally, and it had to settle the fate of those who were primarily responsible for the Bristol farce. All were disturbed. They burst out against the Quakers. They were all Levellers, the whole pack of them, and against authority and possession! They proceeded quickly and leniently with Nayler's companions. It was suggested that the three women and the man should be sent to the reformatory for three months, afterwards to be released. Their fate was handed over to the committee who had investigated Nayler's case, so that Parliament should hear no more of it.

Only Colonel Sydenham spoke in the same spirit as before: "I cannot but wonder to see the strange temper of the House in this business; how zealous they were for that high sentence against Nayler, though there was no law at all for it, and never quiet till it was done; and now, how different. A punishment far lesser would content them against these women; who, in my opinion, were greater offenders than Nayler, inasmuch as they actually committed idolatry. He denied all honours to himself. For my part, I am altogether unsatisfied by what law you do this. I doubt you have opened a gap to prostitute both life, member, and liberty, to

the arbitrary power of men, who by a vote may do what they will."¹

The following days, however, brought endless petitions on behalf of Nayler. Parliament was given no peace.

A petition, written as a general defence of Immanence, was sent in by George Fox who, until Nayler's fall, had been himself the recipient of letters and attributes similar to those that had compromised his friend.

"And whether or no it is offence to bow to man, or to kneel before a judge in the world? Whether this be offensive to the world, amongst the world, to bow before such, and among such the truth is not in? And whether or no it would not be offence to such, to bow in Christ where he is manifested, and persecute such as do bow where the thing is in the truth; whether or no such a thing may not be done in the truth, and bee a figure to all the bowings of the earthly Powers which be out of truth, which hath reigned above the seed of God? . . . Whether bowing in the Truth may not be a figure, that the seed of God shall rise, and reign above the Earthly Powers, and they shall bow to it?"² "If the seed of the serpent speak, and say he is Christ, that is the Lyer and the Blasphemer and the ground of all Blasphemy."³

Fox asked Robert Rich to hand over this petition. Not only Quakers, but many outsiders, sent in petitions: residents in Exeter and Bristol, notable people from six counties, several London burghers of high repute.

In a petition, signed by some hundred influential people, the following reasons were given:

¹ Burton, i. 174.

² *A true Narrative of the Examination, Tryall & Sufferings of James Nayler. in the Cities of London & Westminster, and his deportment under them* (1657), p. 40.

³ Ibid., p. 49.

“As *First* and principally, the Honour of that Cause, for which we have suffered the Loss of a thousand other things, we mean *Conscience-Liberty*, which we conceive to stand in nothing more, than in these two Points (or indeed we may say, bears it self up on them as two main Pillars) viz. *First* that the Civil Magistrate is not the proper Judge of Error or Blasphemy. And *Secondly*, that Corporal Punishment is not a proper punishment for Offences of a Spiritual Nature tho’ it was used to the Jews for divers Special Reasons, was peculiar to that Legal Dispensation only.”

The petition ends up in the following manner:

“We cannot, we dare not cry *Blasphemy*, with all that do so; we dare not throw Men out of Heaven, and out of our Hearts (out of all Love and Pity there) so fast as some can. It is a dark and disguising Time, and scarce anyone wears his own Cloaths. Temptations are abroad, and there is not a Spirit to judge and discern them aright. They many Times are accounted Orthodox, who have least Right to it. . . . And look to it, *the worst of Blasphemies is to make Profession of the Gospel, and have no Love.*”¹

The same persons sent in a petition to Cromwell, enclosing a copy of the above. The climax in their appeal to the Protector was as follows:

“That you will be pleased according to all former Declarations and the Experience we had of your Highness’s Care of this tender Interest of Liberty and Conscience, to weigh the Consequence of these Late Proceedings. And According to the 37th Article of the Instrument aforesaid, and one of the Grounds you declare upon in the War with Spain, your Highness will stand up for the poor people of God in this Day, wherein your Highness will not do more Right to your Petitioners, than to your self and these Nations.”²

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

It was further testified that Nayler was very ill after the cruel treatment that he had sustained, and it was demanded that the further execution of the sentence should be postponed or remitted.

Parliament was inundated with individual petitioners as well as with written petitions. At the entrance-gates lay a woman calling out that Parliament had turned justice into bitter herbs and right into a poisonous plant. And there were no less than thirty petitioners outside insisting that they should be allowed entrance in person. Their spokesman was Joshua Sprigge, a former chaplain to the army. Cromwell's chaplain, Jeremiah White, was there also.

"Several peaceable and well-affected Persons, being sadly sensible of the Consequence of such Proceedings, did address themselves by Petition to the Parliament . . . at the Bar of the House, . . . about one Hundred eminent Persons in . . . the Cities of London and Westminster, in Behalf of themselves and many others."¹

"Are these your honest men, that petition for a horrid blasphemer, an imposter, and a seducer? . . . Had you anything from himself, of recantation, it were something. But, as the case is, if ten thousand should come to the door and petition, I would die upon the place before I could remit the sentence you have already passed," thundered Mr. Downing.

"I know it was untrue, what was confidently affirmed here, concerning Nayler's being so indisposed on Saturday last," exclaimed Mr. Bampfield.²

But on Boxing Day a letter fell like a bombshell in their midst. They were bound to listen to it. It came from the Protector in consequence of the petition addressed to him. It was quite short, and demanded full particulars as to the reasons why

¹ *Memoirs*, pp. 59, 60, 61.

² Burton, i. 218.

Parliament, without his consent, had proceeded with Nayler's case.

Consternation and new discussions followed. . . . "This is the most unfortunate business that ever came into this House. I was against it, at first. . . . If we should give leave, and upon the debate it be found that we have exceeded our jurisdiction, where are we then? We must, every individual, go to my Lord Protector for a pardon."¹

"I doubt this will come under the question whether you be a Parliament or no. If you be a Parliament you have judicatory power to pass this sentence. . . . If we should rise without asserting our power, James Nayler may have his action against every individual member. Let us behave ourselves like wise men. We have passed a judgment, and owned the jurisdiction. Let us not part with it."²

Mr. Downing, however, was equal to the situation: "It is dangerous either for him to question our power, or for us to question his, in matters that are for the public safety: we must both wink. . . . I know it is drawn from him by importunity, rather than any intention to dispute the authority of Parliament. As I said before, we must wink at one another. Should we look into every thing that is done in the Council?"³

"If you suspend the punishment, you grant the question."⁴

The remainder of the sentence was carried out the same day. The executioner bored a hole in Nayler's tongue and branded him. Burton, who took down the whole debate, went from the House to watch. He had wished Nayler's death, but we can read between the lines that he also was silenced when he saw the

¹ Burton, i. 251-2.

² Ibid., i. 252-3.

³ Ibid., i. 254.

⁴ Ibid., i. 258.

way in which the sentence was carried out. "Nayler embraced the executioner, and behaved himself very handsomely and patiently."

Members were racking their brains in the House to get three different propositions to tally. They wanted both to vindicate their right to judgment, to satisfy the Protector, and to preserve good understanding.

Colonel Sydenham stood there alone like a voice crying in the wilderness: "We live as Parliament men but for a time, but we live as Englishmen always. I would not have us be so tender of the privilege of Parliament, as to forget the liberties of Englishmen. . . .

"I grant this House has a judicial power, as to judge of your own members, or to judge of appeals from inferior Courts, for you are the supreme jurisdiction. But to send for men up out of the country, and to judge them without law, what encroachment is this upon the liberties of the people!

" . . . To try offences *ex post facto* was never a liberty neither in parliament, king, or protector."¹

While the debate continued day after day, something extraordinary again occurred. The night before the 8th of January an attempt to blow up Whitehall and Cromwell was discovered at the eleventh hour. There existed less peaceful confessors and demonstrators of the new kingdom than Nayler. They too wanted Christ as King by means of the sword, like the Crusaders and the army of Independents.²

The news, however, provided a clue for solving the situation. Cromwell's letter had not yet been answered. This was an excellent opportunity, "a

¹ Burton, i. 274-5.

² The pamphlet, *Killing no Murder*, recommended open assault on Cromwell. It took up, point by point, the accusations against Charles I, addressing them to Cromwell.

means to unite and procure a right understanding between us and his Highness."

It was decided to hold a service of thanksgiving and to wait upon Cromwell *in corpore*. It was also suggested "that his Highness be pleased to take upon him the government according to the ancient constitution," as the careful wording ran. Downing assented with alacrity, but there was considerable opposition. "Will you make the Lord Protector the greatest hypocrite in the world, to make him sit in that place, . . . which God has borne testimony sufficiently against, before the Protector and many of you within these walls. . . . Do you expect a thanksgiving day upon this? I desire this motion may die, as abominable. This will set all the honest people of this nation to weeping and mourning."¹ The days passed during debates on the Crown, interspersed by decisions about Nayler, and one day the most princely dinner given by the Protector.

In the answer given to the hundred officers who, on the 6th of March, expressed the discontent of the army at the possibility of a new monarchy, Nayler was again brought in as a decisive factor. Cromwell pointed out that it was absolutely essential to have a power which could neutralise Parliament, "for the case of James Nayler might happen to be your own case. By their judicial power they fall upon life and member, and doth the Instrument enable me to control it?" On the 25th of March the crown of England was definitely offered to Cromwell. The Protector was deluged by visitors and letters, alternately begging him to accept or to reject the crown. Among those who pleaded for the latter alternative was George Fox.

Nobody knows what took place at this moment in the Protector's mind. "Nobody knows his real

¹ Burton, i, 364.

intention," wrote the physician who saw him daily during these crucial days, when his life was darkened by the measures taken to protect him against assassination.

Cromwell's thoughts seem often to have busied themselves with Nayler. Did he regret the clever policy which did not step in to save until it was too late? Or was there some personal bond between them? The Protector suggested to Parliament that warders should be sent to Nayler. Another time he suggested a parson, as he was in a very low state. The Protector kept himself well informed. Only a few weeks before his death he again thought of Nayler. This time he did not act through Parliament, but sent his private secretary, Mr. Malyn, to Nayler in prison.

John Lilburne had once experienced a similar visit. "I know you well enough, you are one of the setting Dogs of the great Men of the Army," he had spat out, "with faire and plausible pretences to insinuate into men, when they have done them wrong, and to worke out their designes when they have done them wrong."¹ Did Nayler perhaps think as Lilburne had done? There is little doubt that Cromwell allowed Nayler to be sacrificed before he made a move in order to force the offer of the crown. But James Nayler wrapped himself in silence and did not use the opportunity to obtain a favour. He refused the offer of a physician. What secret connected these two no one knows.

More than once Quaker writings allude to the prayers offered up by Cromwell before the battle of Dunbar – prayers and promises which both Levelers and Quakers believed that he had betrayed. Strangely enough, it was just in the surge after this battle – decisive in a double sense as it was –

¹ *The History of Independency, etc.*, p. 179.

that Nayler stood up and spoke so that he stirred his listeners to the depths. And we may wonder if Lambert's testimony to Nayler's great usefulness meant something more than mere usefulness in the service. When Cromwell, supported by Lambert, was made Protector, Nayler wrote to him "in Love" – "to you, with whom I have Served for the good of these Nations, between eight and nine Years, counting nothing too dear to bring the Government into your Hands (for the Liberty of free-born men) as many can witness with me herein. And now my Prayer to God for you is, that you may lay down all your Crowns at his Feet, who hath given you the Victory; that so the Lord being set up as King in every Conscience, all may be subject for Conscience sake."¹

But this time Cromwell's emissary received no word from Nayler's lips, no greeting, no thanks, no prayer. And yet the great man had in the end renounced the tremendous temptation. Not until the endless funeral procession a year and a half afterwards passed through the streets of London with a "*deadly* corpse," did the wax effigy of the Protector carry all the regalia of the Stuart kings – a pompous "sign" of a past, of how the sceptre had fallen from fainting hands. And when again there was fresh "overturning," no revenge could reach Cromwell. It was only his dead body that the new rulers were able to tear out of the grave, to be hanged and desecrated as another sign to all people of the nothingness of earthly dominion.

¹ *Works*, p. 187.

AT THE PILLORY

NAYLER had a friend who with true loyalty stood forth to help him, and that was Robert Rich. He was a curious contrast to his beloved James Nayler. He belonged to an old and influential family; he loved splendour and was very wealthy, owning both ships and plantations. In response to that which was true and original in the Quaker message, to which he listened in London in 1654, he had decided to throw in his lot with the Friends. He did not, however, cut off his long hair or alter his mode of dress. It might be said of him as it was said of his contemporary, Colonel Hutchinson: "Having naturally a very fine thickset head of hair, kept it clean and handsome, so that it was a great ornament to him; although the godly of those days, when he embraced their party, would not allow him to be religious because his hair was not in their cast, nor his words in their phrase, nor such little formalities altogether fitted to their humour."

This Robert Rich, who had lived every day in splendour and great affluence, gave himself none the less whole-heartedly to the new movement. He supported it with his influence and with his means, and shared during two years the hardships of its members, their missionary journeys, and their persecutions. In 1655 he was kept in Banbury prison together with Richard Farnsworth and two women Quakers. Farnsworth may have told a great deal about Nayler and the early years of wanderings in

the North. We do not know when Rich met Nayler for the first time. But both his personality and his message of God's Immanence had won the large, honest, generous heart of the financier. Rich had no appreciation of half-tones. He was all for or all against, and he loved Nayler with his whole soul.

Whatever Nayler's companions might have been guilty of, Rich was absolutely convinced that Nayler's share in the episode was the outcome of his faith in the "Light" dwelling in all men. We have already seen Robert Rich standing at the entrance of Parliament, ready to prove Nayler's innocence. He had written letter after letter, sent petition after petition, and also delivered George Fox's letter vindicating the belief in Immanence, but refraining from alluding to Nayler except in the strangely worded postscript.

On the 18th of December, the day when the first part of Nayler's sentence was to be carried out, Robert Rich, in sumptuous attire, appeared again at the entrance-gate of the House. He knew how every member had voted and spoken. In grim and searching sincerity he threw out a blessing or a curse as each member passed in. "These words past with such a Power (mix'd sometime with Singing) that none resisted or gainsaid. Between ten and Eleven of the Clock, he went from the Parliament-Door down Stairs into the great Hall (singing very loud) and seeing the Commissioners of the Great Seal sitting there Judges in the Court of Chancery, stood still over against them, and cried, *The Land mourns because of Oppression, and for the Want of Justice and true Judgment, the Land mourns.* And from thence he went with a great Multitude following of him, into the Palace-yard round the Pillory, singing."¹

¹ *Memoirs*, pp. 50-1.

There were great crowds assembled in the square, but no one interfered. People drew back so that he could walk as he pleased. At last his brother, a member of the Government and of the High Court, found a way out. He gave a large sum of money to some soldiers, asking them to take Robert Rich away by force and place him in a coach to be carried away “(for it seem’d the Lawyers were so struck that they could not go on in their Pleadings) and the Soldiers were ordered for to watch him strictly, that he got not forth, so they carried him to the ‘Bull and Mouth’ near Alders-Gate; but their Watchmen being blind, he passed by them, and went again to the Parliament-Door, and from thence thro’ the Hall into Palace-yard to the Pillory singing aloud, and none of the multitude was suffered to do him any Harm. At length he . . . was carried away Prisoner, as was said, by means of his Brother.”¹

In the meantime, Nayler was standing in the pillory, right in front of the door of the large hall, not far from the centre of the Palace Yard. He could be seen from the hall, with a paper stuck to his hat, carrying the following inscription: “For horrid Blasphemy and being a Grand Impostor and Seducer of the People.”² The day was exceptionally cold, and he stood there, stripped to the waist, for fully two hours. After this came the whipping with a “whip of seaven cords (as I heard full of knotts) from the Pallace Yard to the Exchange.”³ He “received 310 Stripes as the Hangman told the Sheriff, and was to have one more (for there were 311 Kennels) but his Foot slipping, it fell on his own Hand, and cut him much.”⁴ “I did not hear that he spoke a

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 51.

² Quoted from Brailsford, p. 147.

³ Brailsford, p. 148.

⁴ *Memoirs*, p. 50.

word but only before his whipping began, he desired the Lord to make him go through it."

"The Bayliffs that rid as the cart went along were very cruell. Some of them trodd many times on his feet with their horses, and crusht him against the cart. Thus his sorrows were increased, yet opened he not his mouth . . . against them that hath thus used him, but prays for them, sometimes with tears. . . . Such effect the first day's sufferings had upon many, that were even pierced through therewith, and some who were strangers, who walked not with him, were stirred up to petition the Parliament."¹

After the execution, Nayler was thrown into Bridewell prison. Here came Rebecca Travers, who had met him at a dinner-party the previous winter at a time when he was fêted by everybody. She sent immediately off the following account to Parliament:

"To my best discerning there was not a Space bigger than the Breadth of a Man's Nail free from Stripes and Blood, from his Shoulders near his Waste; and his right Arm was sorely Striped. His Hands also were sorely hurt with the Cords, that they bled, and were swell'd.

"The Blood and Wounds of his Back did very little appear at first Sight by reason of the Abundance of Dirt that covered them, till it was washed off.

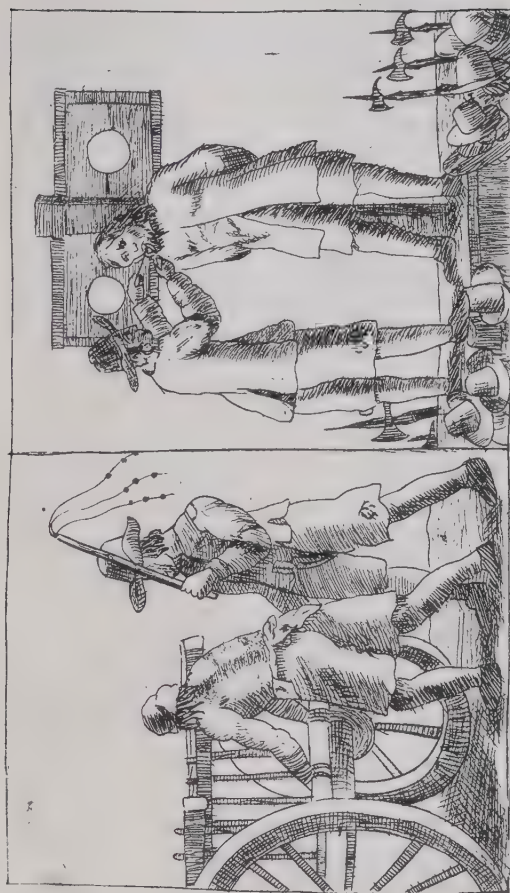
"This I saw coming to him above an Hour after his Whipping, in all Which Time none had been with him, or sent to him to look after his Wounds.

"REBECCA TRAVERS."²

This letter was read in Parliament the following day. "I would have the Merchant's wife that reported it sent for, and whipped," was the comment

¹ Brailsford, p. 148.

² *Memoirs*, pp. 58-9.



James Nailor Quaker set 2 hours on the Pillory at Westminster whipped by the Hang
 man to the old Exchange London, Som dayes after, stood too hours more on the Pillory
 at the Exchange and there had his Tongue bored throug with a hot Iron, &c
 Stigmatized in the forehead with the Letter B; Decemr. 17: anno Dom. 1696:

THE PUNISHMENTS OF JAMES NAYLER

From an old engraving

in which one of the members expressed his discomfiture on hearing the unpleasant statement.

The strong public opinion against the ill-usage made Parliament postpone the second part of the punishment to the 27th of December, a delay which was taken by many as a sign that the sentence would be rescinded.

AT THE TREE OF SHAME

NAYLER's strange entry into Bristol, which was intended to be a sign and a parable, had instead passed off as a caricature and a fool's play. But there came a time when, without the least intention on his part, Nayler was to be something of a sign and a parable. There was, however, a short interlude between the two executions. Major-General Lambert suggested in Parliament that a physician be sent to Nayler. It was rejected. But a proposal to send five eminent divines to convert him was carried.

It was Christmas Eve, this day of idolatrous birthday celebration which Parliament had decreed must not be remembered. The five learned men arrived expecting to find the prisoner, who six days earlier had been whipped almost to pieces, turned into a humble, penitent sinner. In vain did Hubbertorne plead that he might be allowed to remain during the interview. All witnesses were shut out. On hearing this, Nayler refused to answer their questions, unless all that was said was written down, and a copy of the record, signed by one of the ministers, left with Nayler or the warder. After some discussion, this was agreed.¹

Would Nayler renounce his blasphemies?

A. "What blasphemies? Name them."

They were not able to give particulars.

"Would you have me recant and renounce you know not what?"

¹ *Memoirs*, pp. 65 ff.

Did he believe there was a Jesus Christ?

A. "He did believe there was, for he had tasted of Him; and that Jesus had taken up his Dwelling in his Heart and Spirit; for the testimony of Him he now suffered."

One of the ministers declared that he believed "in a Jesus that never was in any man's Heart," meaning no doubt the historical Jesus. Nayler answered that "he knew no such Christ; for the Christ he witnessed, fills Heaven and Earth, and dwells in the Hearts of Believers." "Again they demanded of him why he suffered those women &c. to worship and adore him. To which he reply'd, 'Bowing to the Creature, I deny: But if they behold the Power of Christ wherever it is, and bow to it, he had nothing by which he might resist that or gainsay it.'"

About eight o'clock Hubberthorne met the Ministers on their way out, and was now let into the prison. Nayler related the interview to him, and it is to Hubberthorne we are indebted for recording it. He ends up with the following account: "But after a while, he seeing them not contented with plain Answers, but seeking to wrest Words out of him to their own Purpose, in Meekness uttered these Words, How soon have you forgot the Work of the Bishops, who are now found in the same, seeking to insnare the Innocent? Whereupon they rose up, and with Bitterness of Spirit burnt all that they had before written; and so left him with some bemoaning Expressions, rather discovering a prejudic'd Spirit, than real Affection to the Good of his Soul."¹

The report of the theologians proved conclusively to Parliament that Nayler was hardened, and there was no more question of setting aside the sentence.

Three days later, on the 27th of December, Nayler was brought in a coach to the "Black Boy,"

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 67.

close to the Old Exchange. He was left there from eleven to twelve. At the stroke of twelve, soldiers with halberds brought him up to the pillory, where they made fast his head. He stood there fully two hours before the branding.

Robert Rich was there too. From eight o'clock he had been standing at the doors of the House hoping for a last-minute repeal. To one member, whom he regarded as innocent, he called out: "He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth with God, for God is Love." To another he was heard to say: "He that hateth his Brother is a Manslayer" – "and several other the like Speeches, dividing many such words he separated between the good from the Bad."

"And altho' it was then thought that James Nailer would not have suffered any further Punishment, by reason that there were many honourable Persons then attending the Parliament and Protector on Behalf of the said James Nailer; and likewise the Protector had sent to the Parliament a Letter, &c. yet the said Rich then told the People, that the Innocent was going to suffer; and crying to the Parliament, that he was clear from the Blood of all Men, and desiring them to be so too, departed, and came before the Exchange, where, with James Nailer, he went on the Pillory where he stood, and sate by him, with two other Women that sate on each Side by him, till after a good Space, Robert Rich took a Paper out of his Pocket, and placed over his Head, whereon was written,

It is written, Luke 23. 38.

This is the King of the Jews.

"But presently an Officer stept up, and pull'd it down, and turn'd Robert Rich and the two Women off the Pillory; but after a while they lifted up

Robert Rich again on the Pillory where he staid till James Nailer had undergone his Sufferings for that time.”¹

“He having stood till Two, the Executioner took him out; and having bound his Arms with Cords to the Pillory, and having put a Cap over his Eyes, he bad him put forth his Tongue, which he freely did; and the Executioner with a red hot Iron, about the Bigness of a Quill, bored the same, and by Order from the Sheriff, held it in a small Space, to the End that the Beholders might see and bear witness that the Sentence was thoroughly executed; then having took it out, and pulling the Cap off that cover’d his Face, he put a Handkerchief over his Eyes, and putting his Left Hand to the back Part of his Head, and taking the Red-Hot Iron Letter in his other Hand, put it to his Forehead, till it smoak’d, all which Time James never so much as winc’d, but bore it with astonishing and Heart-melting Patience. Being unbound, he took the Executioner in his Arms, embracing and hugging him, after which Robert Rich, thro’ his ardent love, licked the Wound on his Forehead.”² As he often afterwards quoted from a libellous pamphlet, he was “the dog that licked Lazarus’ sores.”

James Nayler said afterwards that the only thing he was conscious of during all this suffering was a sense of peace.

The crowds stood by watching the performance in breathless silence; here and there they bared their heads. There “might be many Thousands of People.”

Three weeks later, the 17th of January, 1657, the last instalment of the penalty was carried out. It was intended to be a parody of his former entry into Bristol. He was placed on an old hack, “his face to

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, i. 68, 69.

the Tail," and was brought into the city of Bristol. After this he was undressed and tied to the horse to be whipped.

This time, however, there was no ring of aloofness round him. Many people cried. "These wretched Quakers that would scarce seem to own Nailor at his coming in the 24. of Octob. Yet now many accompanie him, and when he was going to horse at the gate, though in that shameful manner (as before) yet use these expressions . . . Behold the Lamb of God. . . . This is the cornerstone. . . . They shall look upon him whom they have pierced. . . . These wretches wept,"¹ wrote Grigge with indignation.

In Bristol the authorities allowed a person to hold back the hand of the executioner as he delivered the blows. "And Whereas of Custom the Bellman goes before and makes Proclamation of the Offence of the Offender, yet here the Keeper commanded the Bellman to the contrary. . . . All the while he pass'd along, his dear and worthy Friend, Robert Rich, rode bare-headed before him, singing Holy, Holy."²

It was on the road to Bristol that Nayler in confidence related to Rich the scene in the prison, about which he seems neither before nor afterwards to have spoken. Long after Nayler's death, Rich related it in his open letter to Fox: "I assure thee, I received it from J. N.'s own mouth, as I went with him from London to Bristol to receive his Crucifixion there."³

On his return to London, Nayler was put into the hole at Bridewell, a cold, dark, damp, evil-smelling place. But all those who had taken part in the performance, and acknowledged that they were far

¹ W. Grigge, *The Quaker's Jesus* (London, 1658), p. 21.

² *Memoirs*, p. 70.

³ *Hidden Things*, p. 37.

more guilty than Nayler, were set free without further ado. They were first, however, ordered to listen to various sermons in Westminster, which, it was hoped, would have some effect. Everybody was thankful not to have anything more to do with this affair, and to wash their hands of it.

ECHOES

"DIDST not thou, G. F., (before J. N.'s tryal at Westminster), give forth a paper under thy hand, wherein thou didst not only judg him thy self, but also provoked other thy friends to do the like, saying in thy Paper, Friends shall not be judged for judging of him; and was not this Judas his spirit, and the first cause or ground of separation, and of Friends judging their innocent Brethren, and betraying one another: though in that Paper thou didst not declare (much less prove) the least evil J. N. had said or done. This Paper of thine was openly laid upon the Table in the little Room by G. R.'s Meeting Room, for any to see, especially those in the ministry; which Paper I took (G. F. being present) and have still by me in this island, to show to any that herein desire satisfaction."¹

In these words did Robert Rich address Fox about twenty years after Nayler's death. These questions were answered by ice-cold silence and indignation, as an insult to a spiritual leader raised far above every suspicion. They had led to Rich's exclusion from the society, and the contempt in which he was held was so intense that his gift of money to the relief of poor Quakers who were homeless after the fire of London was ostentatiously rejected.

Robert Rich was the only one who had been told by Nayler himself something of what took place between Fox and Nayler. He probably felt bound to keep silence as long as Nayler lived, as Nayler himself never seems to have referred to the subject after

¹ *Hidden Things*, p. 38.

his outburst at the trial in Bristol and his communication to Robert Rich, and never let a shadow of his feelings fall upon Fox.

But the enormous gulf that was gradually fixed by the main Quaker body between themselves and Nayler did not owe its existence solely to the eccentric conduct which led to the parliamentary judgment. As Braithwaite points out, this sign was "in line with other early extravagances already alluded to, and was intended to bring home with dramatic emphasis the cardinal Quaker doctrine that Christ was come to teach His people."¹

Had not scores and scores of private "Friends" taken it upon themselves to go as "signs," one in a more peculiar garb than the other? They had often come into conflict with the law courts, but, *before* Nayler, *not* with their own co-religionists!

The New Testament expression which is generally translated as "the children of God" has in Greek the more challenging form "sons of God." All who had been vouchsafed such individual religious experience on which the Quaker movement was based, possessed a living conviction that they in their own lives had experiences of a spiritual nature identical to those which are described in such varied forms, especially in St. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles. To awaken men and women to a knowledge of the possibility of a direct *intercourse with* God, "to be born of God," was the goal of all their "preaching of the Truth."

Had not Fox with profound conviction answered "Yes" to the question whether he was the *son* of God and whether he had seen God's face? He had also been brought before Parliament, accused of blasphemy, for the third offence, with the greatest possible danger of being hanged. For at that time

¹ Braithwaite, p. 254.

there was a statute dealing with blasphemy. But the Parliament which had acquitted Fox was other than that which judged Nayler.

How obviously had Fox, like Nayler, imitated New Testament scenes. If we scrutinise the enthusiastic utterances of the rank and file addressed to Fox, we find them as exaggerated, though not as dramatic, as those addressed to Nayler. When he came to middle age, Fox crossed out with thick pencil-marks the biblical panegyrics found in letters to himself, written not only by illiterate farmers and tradesmen, but by educated people like Margaret Fell. In the age of enthusiasm he had not done so. He let it be and thought of what was greater.

"Yet in these didst not thou, G. F. (after thy former censures) plead his cause before the Parliament by Papers thou gavest me to deliver to them . . . proving those things lawful and good, if done to the seed (as thou sayest) from whence (I say) some have concluded, that if those very things had been openly acted (as they were in a private chamber) to the seed of exaltation, pride, and self-love in G. F. (as they were to that of innocency, humility, and self-denial in J. N.) all had been well approved, both by G. F. and all that owned him; who notwithstanding judged J. N. therein, as one that had lost his authority, was fallen from the truth, and with whom they had no unity.

". . . for thou hast not remembred the afflictions of Joseph, but hath evilly intreated them, and lorded thy self over the light of God in others, and thereby carried them out of the sure way (wherein the fool cannot err) into the darksome and lonesome wilderness of strife and contention."¹

The voice of Robert Rich was full of indignation. He was by this time the only voice among the

¹ *Hidden Things*, p. 39.

Friends who dared challenge the authority of Fox. He dealt with a question of principle, probably the same principle which Farmer regarded as paramount when he pointed to the danger of leaving accepted tradition. They viewed the religious community from an entirely different standpoint, however. It was obvious to Farmer that the strongest bond of union must consist in an external authority whose decrees and traditions must not be overruled. Rich held that the inner unity of inspiration and freedom in the Spirit was the only unerring form of unity in Christian community life, a unity made up of various elements. This idea had guided the first spontaneous group life of the Friends and called forth the vision of the new kingdom of democrats. True brotherhood in diversity could not exist without deep inner unity in the Spirit.

Fox, like Cromwell, chose a political middle course. He passed by degrees from a democratic to an imperialistic type. He identified himself more and more with Him who had chosen him, in the way of the ancient rulers. As Cromwell felt himself called of God to chastise the Irish, so did Fox know that God urged him to despise Nayler. He became a wise and remarkable ruler, but the absolute honesty which was his while he was still a prophet, grew blunted. Like Cromwell, Fox had to experience the anxiety of the disillusioned, if only for a short time. Very soon the Quakers were forced to a renewed unity and sincerity by the violent persecutions instigated against them under the new régime, and for a time the fundamental or, rather, practical differences vanished. Again and again, however, cases of insubordination arose. Fox's manner in dealing with these lies outside the scope of this book, but shows a great similarity to his attitude in the original conflict which is here under discussion.

In order to understand Fox, we must bear in mind that Nayler's "sign" as the Messiah was mixed up with the armed revolts of the Fifth Monarchy Men. It was universally held that Quakers and Baptists were the driving-power behind these. The time following on Nayler's punishment was full of anxiety for those in the Quaker ranks. It was dimly felt by Friends also that a terrible injustice had been done to Nayler, but as to what this amounted to they were not quite clear. The meetings in London were again disturbed by those who clung to Nayler—"Ranters and loose persons," Fox called them. A group of women stood in the breach. Courageous and obstinate, they held their meetings of protest at the Old Exchange and in other places where Nayler had suffered. They were not as ready to subordinate themselves under Fox as were Nayler's male friends. Some made direct attacks, like Mildred and Judy, the former using the drastic parliamentary method of talking for hours, so as to prevent the ordinary leaders from speaking. They "disturbed our Friends Meetings in London by their Ranting, Singing, Bawling and Reproaching us, crying out against divers of our faithful Ministers and their Testimonies, in this manner, viz. You have lost the Power; You have lost the Power."¹ They were bitterly opposed to Fox, and his policy of holding aloof from the criminal Nayler for the good of the cause. There is no more reason to suspect that Nayler, from behind his treble locks in Bridewell prison, was responsible for these scenes than that he had been responsible for Martha's visit to Fox in Launceston. But this idea had once for all taken hold of Fox.

Fox faced the general scandal with intense bitterness. It did not seem to occur to him that he might

¹ Whitehead in Nayler's *Works*, xvi.

have some responsibility for it. Distorted accounts pictured not only Nayler, but Quakers generally, as ridiculous madmen, pitiful examples of the degradation to which misguided beliefs could lead. There were individuals, however, who, like Colonel Sydenham, saw the real scandal to lie in the way in which Parliament had treated Nayler. But Fox put the whole blame on Nayler as the initial cause, not only of the shame brought on the Quakers from outside, but of the disruption within their own ranks. If, however, the Blasphemy Act of 1650 had been applied, Fox himself would have been nearer the rope than Nayler was, in the absence of any such act, but he evidently made no objective comparison or self-criticism in this respect. He spoke as one who was in his rights, injured by Nayler personally and on behalf of the movement. If Fox shows any fault, it is not foolishness, but rather too much common sense without a sufficient amount of charity to counterbalance it. "Plucke in thy hornes, James," he writes definitely in his letter of excommunication to Mildred. And to James Nayler himself he writes:

"As Martha cryed ag^t the truth, & Hannah, soe now doe thy disciples come, and such as have had relation to y^e Ranters, w^{ch} are got up, & come, and cry ag^t y^e truth, wth impudency and boldnesse, and such bee yo^u and they as cause y^e truth, the right way to bee evil spoken of: But James, y^e power of y^e Lord God of light, life, & truth, is owned, though thou, & all y^e world should deny it, soe come to y^t of god in thee, w^{ch} lets thee see. The lord let you see yo^r condition, and forgive y^{ou}, for everyone of yo^u must feelee a reward according to yo^r workes; and thou when first thou was tryed at Exeter, thou wast out of y^e power of god, soe thy sacrifice is not

accepted. Now it is manifest them y^t bee of thy stocke begotten disciples, w^{ch} are turned from y^e power, that w^{ch} formerly they were in, & owned, Cain like are turning now ag^t the just, & betraying to the world, & makeing Tumults, and stirring up Tumultuous people, mockers and scoffers to sporte themselves ag^t y^e truth, soe joined to y^e Edomites, and those call thee Lord. Therefore Oh, James. bee awakened & consider, arise & shake of and come from under y^e cloud of Earth, y^e darkenesse, hadst thou been obedient to the voice of y^e sone of God, the Lambe of god, jnnocensie should have cleared thee, the powers of darkenesse should not have touched thee, but James thou, & thy disciples, being out of y^e power, the power is over yo^u, & all your poyson, and raileing speeches doth not touch mee though they come and raile ag^t the truth as y^e world doth, it doth not touch y^e truth, ; & such as had been loose, & at liberty formerly, whoe were come under y³ judgement of y^e truth, now are come to liberty, & thou art a tree to shelter them; Never talk of y^e Lambe of god, the sone of god, while yo^u are betraying him and psecuting him, & dellivering him to y^e world through a false christ, yo^u that have been y^e comers & goers to y^e sone of god, hee is in the desert; Soe all yo^u y^t are ag^t the power of truth, & are hardned, w^{ch} it once convinced, yo^u hath y^e power of truth denyed yo^u doth y^e power of truth judge; for James thou seperated thyselve from freinds, & drew a company after thee, & soe seperated from y^e power of y^e Lord god, yet truth followed thee and bowed downe to thee under thee; to recover thee, & yo^u kicke against it, & soe all them that depart from freinds, to thee come, whoe would gather a party, make a party in the selfe – seperation Crying against the truth, which formerly they were convinced by, with it yo^u are judged

and condemned, w^{ch} truth shall answer that of God in everyone of yo^u, though yo^u may run and compasse a while, and boast of joy, & peace, up in the Aire, from the truth, but truth hath comprehended them & thee, and yo^u fathomed This is y^e word of y^e Lord god to thee, & the rest of thy disciples, and come downe to witnesse of god in yo^u, this is y^e word of y^e Lord god to yo^u, Christ takes uppon him the seed, & to it is marryed, ffrom him whoe is of y^e world called

“G. ff.

“All freinds (whoe this comes too) dwell in y^e light, life, & power w^{ch} comprehends darkenesse, wee are not them y^t takes pleasure in laying open nakednesse; but doth clear y^e truth in y^t sight of god, & all his childeren.

“G. ff.”¹

This letter “to Nayler” was evidently an open pastoral letter. It reflects the situation and the consequent anxiety and sorrow of the chief. But it had not a word suggesting personal responsibility or any human feeling for the tortured and defenceless prisoner, for whom it was intended.

In the country districts many recanted because of the scandal on account of Nayler. The situation caused consternation everywhere. In many places women preachers were no more tolerated. There was a strong reaction, but no one understood the hidden connection. Like lightning from a clear sky came the news that their greatest leader next to Fox had been disowned by him and sentenced by Parliament.

William Edmundson, Nayler’s friend from the

¹ Markey MSS., 122.

army who had come to hear him in the North, received the strange news while in prison in Ireland: "But what added to my trouble," he writes, "News was brought me of James Nayler's Miscarriage. This came very near me, and brought me under great trouble of mind, so that I said in my Heart, How shall I be able to stand through so many Temptations and Trials which attend me daily, since such an one as He is fallen under Temptation? And I mourned in my Spirit. In the Interim the Lord answered me and said, 'Truth is Truth, though all men forsake it.' This strengthened me and comforted me in my Trouble."¹

Another who watched and pondered over this riddle was Humphrey Norton, who one morning in bed had an inspiration. He thought it was with Nayler as in the Book of Job. The Lord's hand had touched Nayler as it had the pious Job: "Now have I suffered Satan to lay his hand upon my servant J. N. to touch him for all y^r examples who are in y^e least measure ministers of my spirit, y^t you abuse not ye liberty & freedom."²

"This business about J. N. hath made a great tumult in the minds of many weak Friends; my work is to strengthen the weak, and press home to the foundation of God, and not to admire the persons of men."³

This was a practical solution. Nayler's fate became a warning to all. The unbounded sense of freedom did no longer roar and foam like a river in flood. It settled down quietly in the river-bed and, instead of being an awe-inspiring and irresistible force, turned into a placid river, flowing for centuries, unobserved and peaceful.

We must ask whether "Nayler's fall" would ever

¹ Brailsford, p. 129.

² Portfolio 33. 113.

³ Thomas Salthouse to Margaret Fell, 1657, *Letters of Early Friends*, p. 227.

have taken this course amongst Quakers without the intervention of Fox. Nayler's personality had greatly impressed a large number of non-Quakers, and one of these felt it his duty to give "a true account" of "that most eminent person" James Nayler. On the other hand, among the many public denouncements in print, several were written by Quakers, a circumstance which greatly distressed the able and kind Sarah Blackbury, who sat down to write in Nayler's defence. She urged everybody to cease judging and criticising, and instead to enter into suffering and seek communion with him who suffers.

Among the quiet in the land, where the memory of "the dear James Nayler" could not be reconciled to the picture of the terrible criminal whom Parliament had judged and Fox excommunicated, words did not come so readily, but people suffered there in dumb sorrow, unable to grasp the meaning of it all. "At present I am pretty well in the outward, but afflicted, yea, sore afflicted, with J. N. in his sufferings."¹

¹ Brailsford, p. 128.

FROM THE PRISON JOURNALS

To those who have never known him outside the prison bars, a prisoner seems nothing but a convict, a mere number among the inmates. Friends who have been closely associated with him, and remember him in other surroundings, naturally have an altogether different point of view. But it is astonishing to find how soon the more distant circle of acquaintances begin to look upon a human being with the eyes of a gaoler.

The journals of Old Bridewell have a good deal to relate of the prisoner James Nayler and of his conduct, from the viewpoint of the personnel in charge of the prison. There are, to begin with, minute instructions as to his being kept under lock and key. The regulations are so rigid that it must have been suspected that a strong political party stood behind him, working assiduously for the deliverance of their leader.

“A Court and Meeting holden at Bridewell on Wednesday, the 28th of January, 1656 (1657).

“. . . it is ordered by the governors here present that the said James Naylor shall be kept at hard labour in the room on the west side of the common prison . . . and that he shall be lodged therein on the bedding, coverlet, two blankets and sheets there laid for him, to the end he may take no cold, and that he shall not have any fire or candle and that the inner door of that room shall be kept locked by the porter . . . with the lock that is thereon, and that the outward door . . . shall be kept locked with two good locks and keys, one lock being thereon

already and another good lock shall be forthwith provided . . . and that the steward . . . shall keep the key to the new lock . . . and the porter shall keep the key to the old lock . . . and . . . not suffer each other . . . to have both the said keys at any time . . . the said steward and porter shall search the hemp delivered him to work both within and without at the delivery of the same unto him and at the receiving of the same from him, and that he shall have for his relief so much as he shall earn by his hard labour.”¹

In February 1658, it was stated that the prisoner had a very weak pulse, bad digestion, and an open sore on his leg. He had asked to be given water, milk, and porridge instead of bacon and ale. Some of the prison officials, however, had found him healthy and cheerful.

Anne Naylor had come to London as she had once travelled to Appleby. In vain she waited week after week for permission to see her husband. After a short interview in the presence of four gaolers, she sent the following petition to the Government, the only document written by her own hand which has been preserved*:

“ Anne Naylor, “ To His Highness and the Council,
Petition, The Representation and the Petition of Anne
Read 24th Febr., 1656. Naylor, wife of James Naylor.
“Shewith,

“That notwithstanding all the extreme sufferings of my husband, when his body stood need of refreshing for his recovery, yet he is cast into that called the ‘Hole in Bridewell,’ a cold, dampish unsavory place, where the damp strikes up his legs like

¹ Court Book of Bridewell Hospital, 14th October, 1642, to 7th July, 1658, reproduced in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. xxiii. Nos. 1 and 2.

² From R. Barclay’s *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 426.

water, when he requires air and fire; kept under three keys, put in three several men's hands, that when one is present another is absent; and is not allowed so much as a candle; being in the hands of cruel and unmerciful men, who neither will suffer me, his wife, to come to him, except four governors be present, nor suffer what I carry him to come to him, who much increase his misery beyond all orders of Parliament; their preventing of your own order may be sufficient proof to you what cruel minds are in them, for though you ordered his wife's coming to him, and that they should see that he be accomodated with convenient necessities, yet neither of these is done, because (they say) it is referred to them. Whereas the order says expressly, to see that he be accomodated with convenient necessities.

"His keepers are cruel also, one especially, Win by name, who when my husband desired a little fair conduit water, because one had put a little sugar in it, he poured it into the kennel; another time he turned back a poor dish of turnips and would not let them go in, besides divers other things which I would have carried him, to preserve his life; and this is not all, but *they have raised a false report of my husband, to harden your and all other men's hearts against him, saying that he starves himself, and will not eat what is carried him, when as his body is so weak that he cannot eat that which is strong. He told the governors, in my hearing, that he did but eat a bit of flesh meat which they brought him, and he was very ill after it, but said also, that he did not refuse such things as he could eat.*

"And truly I cannot otherwise think, but that his keepers and others have a design to starve him, for they have kept his condition from me as much as they could, and having brought him so weak for

want of convenient food (that now they have a cover for themselves) they have sent to the doctor, one Dr. Nurse, unknown to me, which the doctor finding him so weak, that he prescribed him milk with sugar of roses to take, whereby you may understand that this is not feigned.

"My humble request, therefore, is that you would be pleased (if he must continue longer in prison) that he may be where he may have air and fire, and be allowed candle-light, and the attendance and company of his own wife, or one whom she shall appoint, to supply him with convenient necessities out of his own state, and be but under one lock.

"But rather, that you would be pleased wholly to release him for his family's sake, who have not offended you (he having suffered all the part of your sentence, and lying only a prisoner during pleasure), that his body may be refreshed by air and comfortable looking to, if it may be.

"ANNE NAYLOR."

An eminently practical, tender, and upright woman worded this petition, which has throughout such a strong personal touch. She still believed in him. She did not plead that his errors might be pardoned. She came full of goodness, as she did once before in Appleby.

In March the prison doctor reported that Naylor was healthy rather than ill, although he was weak and suffered from indigestion and increased coughing. "I first find," reported Dr. Nurse, "that James Naylor may without danger of life come up to the court to all their views, if they please. I find secondly that he is in a state of health rather than in a state of sickness; he is yet in a state of weakness and of late he complains of a pain in his stomach after eating pudding twice; he also complains of a cough

increasing upon him, to which he hath been formerly subject to in the army.

“Mr. Deputy James, apothecary, and one of the governors here, now also reported that he has now felt James Naylor’s pulse, and upon his further enquiry of him, he is of opinion that he is in a state of health and that nothing of any disease is to be found and as for a pain in his stomach which James Naylor complains of, likewise of a cough which he formerly got in the army, Mr. James is of opinion that if they were so with him, [he] could not be in so good temper as he now is in, and that he finds him something weak, but he considers the occasion thereof to be by his refusing to eat meat and broth, and that if he would more endeavour to work he would have a better stomach to his meat.”¹

In spite of this optimistic report of the apothecary, Nayler became worse towards the spring. He was “put into the room now in the occupation of the widow Pollard over the chapel, the said president and governors, conceiving that a woman would be more necessary about the said James Naylor in the time of his sickness.” The widow was ordered to nurse him day and night, and to make gruel and other invalid food for him, even when he did not ask for it. In the end of May it was feared that something unforeseen might happen to Nayler, and steps were taken to meet the situation. In June it was proposed in Parliament that Nayler should be granted sick leave from prison, which was not unusual in that age. It was at that time dismissed, but there is reason to believe that Nayler was allowed to go home for a time in the following year.

When Malyn, Cromwell’s private secretary, visited Nayler in August, he “found him in his bed, and sitting up with his head on a pillow. I sat by

¹ *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, vol. xxiii., p. 30.

him a good while, and told him upon what account I came to see how he was, and whether he desired any thing to be done to him or for him. He would not speak a word, though often pressed thereto by myself and those that stood by. . . . Truly, my Lord, I look upon him to be under a resolved sullenness, and I doubt in the height of pride.”¹

Widow Pollard evidently began to let in visitors, and the prisoner, in spite of regulations to the contrary, seems to have been able to write as much as he liked. In the summer 1658 there was a marked improvement in Nayler's health, possibly as a result of his release during the winter of 1657-8. In April 1659 he was brought to a workshop with good air. The last entry in the prison journals relates that on the 8th of September the same year Nayler was set free.

¹ L. of E. Friends, p. 54; Malyn's letter to Cromwell. From Nichol's State Papers, p. 143.

BEHIND THE BARS

WHILE Nayler's friends with unwise zeal disturbed the meetings in London, and his wife in vain waited for admittance, Nayler was lying isolated in the "hole," listening to nothing but the rattle of the keys or the keeper's reminder that the hemp needed picking. The only light that reached him penetrated through the small window, closely barred, just below the ceiling in the corner where he slept.

When at last his wife was allowed entrance, the time was so far advanced that she was obliged to go home shortly afterwards. But the apothecary's report of Nayler's cheerfulness coincides with his wife's visit. She must have comforted him as she did in Appleby, where she came and went as an angel of trust in a world of suspicion and evil-speaking.

A letter reached him now and again, urging him to disavow the Quaker rowdies. Fox laid all the blame for their noise and insubordination on Nayler. And his friends, who were not able to see through the heavy cloud, begged him to confess his guilt.

The crucial thing in all that had happened seemed in Nayler's eyes to be the misunderstanding between himself and Fox. He knew that he had thought of Fox in anger and resentment, and that these thoughts had overshadowed the "seed." The rowdiness at the meetings distressed him, but he was not quite prepared to take the responsibility for it. That which he condemned, no earthly judge could pass sentence upon.

The great peace which Nayler carried through

his martyrdom seems to have been followed by a reaction of fatigue. Soon, however, one friend after another managed to get through the rigidly closed doors to Nayler's prison, finding him "tender and loving." In his dark cell he was living through more radical experiences than any that could be produced on the outer stage.

In the summer of 1657 he succeeded in sending a letter to his fellow-confessors by Major William Barcroft's daughter, who had visited him. He had probably been writing it in his bed when the prison attendants were expecting that something unforeseen might happen at any time. It is a letter full of charm, wistfulness, and compassion. In spite of his unjust sufferings, it is altogether unlike the denunciations against evil spirits sent out by Burrough and Fox. It reveals the writer's keen perception of the beauty of eternal life rather than his bitterness against any man or woman on this earth.

"There is nothing dear and precious to me in this World but God's Truth, and his Life of Righteousness; for which I have forsaken all the World, and whatever was dear to me therein, I have hated and counted it as an Enemy, that I might obtain Christ, the Fountain and Spring of that Eternal Life of Truth, the Beauty whereof I cannot express, as I see it and feel it; the Loveliness thereof to my Soul hath so dearly united my Spirit to all that bear the Image and Life of it, that there can be no Separation, but my Life suffers thereby; and I can truly say, that there is no other thing whatsoever that can unite me as one with any Creature living, but this Image and Life, where I see it born up, or breathing to Life; but in Whomsoever it be (without respect of persons) that I see the least appearance of this Seed of Life is, I can (by that Power of Love the Father hath begotten in me) lay down my Life for

the Seed's sake. And wherein I have come short of this formerly, and have respected the High more than stood only in this Seed, I have been judged of the Lord, and my evil Thoughts therein condemned; yea, and I do condemn them before all the World, to be of that which savours Self, and not Things of Christ: And the lower God doth bring me, and the nearer to himself, the more doth his Love and Tenderness spring and spread towards the poor, simple, and despised Ones, who are poor in Spirit, meek and lowly Suffering Lambs; and with those I choose to suffer, and do suffer, wherever they are found, and I bear my Testimony against that Spirit by which they suffer, wherever it is found; and this lies upon me from the Lord: Hearing and feeling a Spirit of Enmity having got head, by what the Lord hath suffer'd to be done with me, and now doth exercise its Power against the Peaceable Meetings of the Lord's People, the Burthen whereof lies heavy upon me, and I suffer under it, and have long waited with Prayers, and Tears of Sorrow, Night and Day, to receive Counsel from the Lord what to do in it, in that Condition I am now in at present: God knows, I lye not; for there is nothing of all my Hardships that hath lain and doth lie upon me like this, that any of the Flock of God should be offended, or suffer through me; therefore I have not ceased to warn (as God hath opened to me) such as I could speak to, to live in Peace and Love; to suffer, but not to act Strife and Violence; and have denied that Spirit, not to be of the Lamb, but an Enemy to him, though the Creature may not know it, but may think it is doing God service. . . .¹

“And the Lord God of Love give us all to see, that whatever our Gifts or Powers be, yet if we have not the Life and Power of Love, it avails not with God,

¹ From *Works*, pp. xxvii.–xxix.

though men may esteem of us never so high; For only he that dwells in Love, knows God, and lives in him; (the rest know not what Spirit they are of). . . . But the envious One hath taken his advantage, which the Lord will turn to his disadvantage, and utter Ruin in many Souls; and in this believing is all my Rest, in my great trouble of Heart, concerning you or my self; and in Patience I wait to see it, when the Man of Sin hath had his Time, to be revealed. For I have seen the good Hand of God working in it; whose End is good to all that love him.”¹

The writer in his prison bed himself received a letter from Robert Rich. This stout champion was as tender towards his “dear lamb” as he was embittered against Fox. He had started out on a round of visits to the country meetings, but found that wherever Fox had been, nobody wanted to have anything to do with Nayler’s friend.

In Bristol, however, he “found many dear tender lambs that were able to discern between things that differ. . . . Here I met G. F. and went to see him where he lodged, with great moderation he spake to me, of many things I found him wise as an Angel of Light, and as one that had all knowledge, and understood all mysteries. After this he sent for me privately alone, where (abiding in my simplicity and integrity) I saw that God had chosen the foolish things to confound the wise; And then it was given me, that G. F. is the Star fallen from Heaven. . . . And since my return to London, sitting in their meetings and hearing his and their words full of knowledge and understanding of truth without life and power, and seeing the enmity they bear towards the innocent, confirms me, that the Vision I had of G. F. is true.”²

By this time, however, the recipient had lost every

¹ From *Works*, p. xxx.

² *Hidden Things*, pp. 41-2.

grudge against Fox. He had forgiven him who had no idea of needing to be forgiven. He was more conscious of what Fox had once given him than of the wounds he had inflicted. Towards the end of 1657, or possibly in the beginning of 1658, he wrote a few lines in answer to this letter from Robert Rich who treasured them as the last he ever received from his dear lamb.

“ALASS DEAR HEART,

“I know there is that amongst them which must be purged, and I have learned it, yet are they the People of God, and bear his testimony against the Beast and his mark . . . but truly my peace flows as a River . . . and I know nothing can take it away, only that all the scattered of my Fathers might come feed within, is all that lies upon me; and truly, my soul hath fulness indeed, of the best since I was stript of all: and exceeding great is my drawings towards you all, who were with me in the hour and power of Darkness, that ye all might drink abundantly of my joy; . . . I know and feel the Lord hath not forgotten thy labour of love, in that day added to all thy former testimony, wherein thou hast born reproach, with me and with the despised flock.”¹

Rich was disowned, like Mildred and the other rebels. Nobody could discover the spark of injustice which lit their undisciplined zeal. And after the discovery of the conspiracy against the Protector the times grew difficult. The Quakers were constantly suspected of being politically dangerous. Without Nayler's knowledge, several of the demonstrators in his favour were thrown into the same prison as he. Loyalty ought surely to have been the paramount duty just then, in the opinion of Fox. Rich, however, thought that sincerity was even more important.

¹ *Hidden Things*, p. 43.

Although he held his peace for years to come, probably on Nayler's account, he felt it later on to be his mission to unmask Fox's mistake in his attitude to Nayler.

Early in 1658 Robert Rich wrote to Nayler: "I believe I might have been received again into fellowship amongst them, but then I must first have turned the truth of God into a lye, and speak evil of those things I knew to be good, denying the testimony which I knew the Lord gave me to finish, and so have betrayed Jesus; which thing I shall never do, so long as the breath of the Almighty is in me; nor call any man master of my Light and Spirit, save God alone. . .

"But he that judgeth his Brother in meats or drinks, or any outward thing, that contends more for his own Traditions than the Commands of God; that will not let his Brother go free to worship God where and how he requireth: I say, this is the Son of the Bond-woman (though called of men Master, and having the uppermost seat at Feasts) which must be cast out, and shall not inherit. . . . O my dear heart, enter not thou into their secrets. . . . For as the Lord lives their nakedness shall be no longer hid; and what hath long lien secret must now be preached upon the house-top. And herein the innocent can and will rejoyce."¹

While Rich advocated an open discussion among the Quaker leaders, intending to reveal Fox's will to power as the real cause of the breach, other Friends wrote to Nayler in a different strain. Fox, dour and threatening, kept an ominous silence.

Nayler had once confided to Rich that he had received harder wounds from friends than from foes. He admitted this when he was to suffer intense bodily torture for the second time. He wrote

¹ *Hidden Things*, p. 44.

about that awful day in Bristol: "How it was with me at that Day, many talk of, but few know." It must have seemed strange when it dawned on him that Fox, far from feeling the need of forgiveness, actually excluded Nayler from the body of Friends in the most uncompromising way: Fox had to create a precedent and punish this instigator of strife. His will to power produced a blind spot in his soul; he saw the movement, but was regardless of the individual.

The other Friends, who had no idea of the hidden connections of events, and in their well-meaning way were anxious to put everything straight, encouraged Nayler again and again to make an effective confession. They were full of a burning desire that he might "come in" once more. Free from the fetters of bitterness and wrath and, although a prisoner, filled with a wonderful peace and joy, he made what confession he could. He seemed to rise from one height to another, finding a fresh historic perspective for the unfathomable that had befallen him. In the beginning of 1658 he writes: "And this the Envious One hath done, in the Night of my Tryal, and Hour of Darkness and Temptation, taking advantage at my Sufferings, in the Day when my Judgment was taken away, and I led Captive under the Power of Darkness, which all along hath sought my Life, had not the Father hid it, and with his Hand upon me, stayed me in those great Temptations; to whom alone I give the Glory of my Deliverance from that great Destruction, as his Promise was to me before I came into that Tryal; who hath now brought me up again, and hath given me to see those Evil Spirits: . . . Which, though they seek Entrance under pretence of Humility, promising some great things, and more Holiness, in that way, to steal into simple Minds; but being got in,

Exalt themselves above the Seed of God, and Trample the meek Spirit under Foot, and so darken the Vessels, and being exalted in the Imaginations, lead the Creature, (as God) above that of God, and so against that of God he Wars in others, where God is above. And this Mystery of deep Iniquity hath the Lord God in the Spirit of the Lamb revealed unto me, whose powerful working I have found, working in me against the pure Measure and Unspotted Life of God. And though in the Simplicity of Christ Jesus, I had given up my body all along, a Free Offering to the Will of God, in Life or in Death, for the Seed's sake, yet ungathered in the world; . . . yet could I often feel that exalted One above, secretly tempting to Envy against the People of God already gathered, pretending a greater thing to come another Way. . . .

"And by this shall you all perceive that Spirit, whatever it pretends, it will secretly withdraw your entire Love from the Flock of God already gathered, and cool your Affections and Zeal towards their present Meetings, and if you judge it not there, it will grow on with an evil Eye, to spy out their Failings, and delight to hear of them, and talk of them with an hidden Joy, whispering them to others, and adding thereunto, with a desire to see them broken, and their Nakedness laid open, if any thing be amiss. . . . And this is the Presence and Fear of God I declare, without the least Prejudice against the Person of any Man or Woman; but in Obedience to God, and for the Seed's sake, lest any more of the Simple should be deceived . . . for wheresoever it enters by consent, it is hardly got out again; and if it be, it is not without much Sorrow: And this I have found in the Depth, which for your sakes I declare in Plainness and Truth."¹

¹ *Works*, xxxii ff. Written in Bridewell about the beginning of 1658.

In his eagerness to make reparation, Nayler tried to reach a wider circle of publicity. He made a new declaration to Parliament on behalf of the Quakers, in full agreement with previous pronouncements:

“Christ Jesus, the *Immanuel* . . . him alone I confess before Men; . . . But to ascribe this Name, Power and Virtue to *James Nayler*, (or to that which had a Beginning and must return to Dust) or for that to be exalted or worshipped, to me is great Idolatry.”¹

He found no cause for self-reproach in his behaviour to the women. It was only outsiders who scented scandal, imagining all kinds of events that might have taken place and all kinds of nonsense that he was supposed to have put into the heads of his followers. With open candour Nayler gave his pronouncements, recognising where he had erred. But he did not speak as one eaten up with shame or wishing to hide the least particle of his own guilt. His emphasis of God's life in the despised was perhaps a continued attempt to shelter the women. He threw no shadow of doubt on anybody else; the guilt of others he kept to himself ever since the heavy secret of his heart burst its bonds on the way to Bristol with Robert Rich.

¹ *Works*, p. xxxv.

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

THERE is an undated letter written by Fox under pressure of the strife and discord in the meetings all over the country in consequence of what had happened to Nayler. While Nayler found a new understanding of the depths of the human soul, until the root of the evil showing both eccentricity and cruelty was laid bare to him, Fox was surveying all its consequences in the outer world. When the stone which has been thrown into the water falls to the bottom, the rings grow larger and larger on the surface of the water, but the stone itself is forgotten for the disturbance it caused.

Fox recognised clearly that the difficulties and the strife were caused by a spirit of arrogance. But he failed to see that he had harboured this spirit himself. As Cromwell was gradually convinced of the need for a stable monarchic power, so did Fox more and more see the necessity for a strong guiding hand, able to outline and stabilise the growth of the movement. That this hand turned out to be his own, not only during his long life, but for centuries to come, was the natural result of his dominating and wise personality, rather than of a deliberately conceived plan. Since Nayler, the former quartermaster with wide connections in the political world, the excellent speaker and beloved companion, was no longer there to represent another point of view, Fox's "infallibility" increased.

Nayler had refused to pay Fox the tribute of humility that was demanded of him in Exeter. Margaret Fell wrote her beseeching letter, saying

how readily she would submit to such a demand if only all could be well again. It was Fox who insisted on this ceremony of worship, ostensibly to the "seed," as a sign of Nayler's submission – a grotesque punishment for one who had sinned by not declining adulation. It is impossible, at least for me to explain the following letter in any other way:

"But James thou canst not come to mee, whoe hath y^e wrong measure and judgment, but my owne is my owne: thou suffered thy disciples to blasphemee, but life & glory stands ouer all; & thy disciples calls trickes the power of the Lord, & pride, & the boaster is up, in takeing my wordes, & turning them into a Lye; My soul hath suffered, & travelled for yo^u all, but I stamp upon the contrary; yea I doe noe more heed it, then y^e earth, whoe can helpe & save wth this power; I would have compassed yo^r weakenesses, & have gathered yo^u as a henn her Chickens, under her wings, & yo^u would not; And James I must not let in any wickednesse, nor a lying spirit; but it is judged wth the spirit of god and my judgement shall stand for ever, though by thee judged false, and not see thee.

"There is noe pardon for thee in this, but judgement, and hast denyed me before men, & wrote y^t I judged thee wth jealousy; from him whoe is unknown to thee, & yo^u; & y^e world; Thou denyest y^e power of god, and calls it deceipt, that is y^e false christ which is risen after y^e true Christ which . . . is judged; but y^e seed is christ jesus, take heed of willfull sinning after thou & yo^u have received y^e knowledge of y^e truth; if thou judge & condemne all y^t whi^{ch} hath been acted, done & spoken, since this utter darkenesse hath taken thee whi^{ch} thou hast acted against the truth uppon thy knees, and

contrary to the life & power that y^t w^{ch} would not bend to y^e life & power is judged wth the life & power . . . of god, then thou art one, & that to bow under y^e power that y^t whc^h is to bee crucified may bow, wh^{ch} hath bowed, that y^t which shall not die, may live in y^e power; and to thee this is y^e word of y^e Lord, that w^{ch} he bowed under, others bowed under, that undercame to him, and that must bee bowed . . . which did bow.

“G. ff.”¹

The whole summer of 1658, apparently after a period of sick-leave, Nayler was longing to be reconciled with Fox. He had then more intercourse with the outside world than before. Friends who came to see him, assured him more than ever of their affection, and implored Margaret Fell to act as intermediary. Their enormous respect for Fox probably prevented them from besetting him directly.

On the 15th of June, 1658, one of them wrote from London to Margaret Fell: “James hath written a few words with much subjection, desiring to be reconciled; and I know that George [Fox] is dearer to him than ever, as by his words I have heard. My dear Sister, as thou hast been tender and of large compassion unto the sufferer, I beseech thee make intercession for him; that in the spirit of meekness, as a brother, he may be restored again.”²

Also James Nayler himself turned to Swarthmore, “astonished and shaken” . . . “for the hardnes & unreconcilableness w^{ch} is, in some.”³

With a mild reference to Fox’s words, questioning whether Nayler had ever known the Spirit of

¹ Undated, Markey MSS., 121.

² Alex. Parker (to M. Fell) 15th of 4th Month, 1658, Old Style.

³ Swm. MSS., iii. 84.

Christ, he wrote: "ffor, if I know any thing of it, or ever have done, That is it w^{ch} naturall inclines to mercy & forgiveness & not to bind one another under a trespass until y^e uttermost farthen, though this may be Just & I doe not Condemn it, Yet I have felt a spt w^{ch} delights more in forgiveing debts & seeks all occation thereto, even when it is not sought to but seeks, And by this spt, I have beene able to beare all things, while it is with me, else had I not beene at this daye so y^t I complaine not as to myselfe in w^t I here write, god knows, but my feare is of provokeing y^e Justice of god without mercy, through not shewing mercy one to an other." ¹

Nayler was anxious for Fox's soul. He loved him far too much to bear thinking of the wrath that dwelt in him. It had meant such a radical change to Nayler to turn from ideology and a political party spirit to the inward side of life, where he now could see more clearly than ever what was actually happening. Fox, who went the opposite way, accepted gradually a conservative attitude towards the movement, which had already emerged into history. He had an outer world to shelter at all costs. His relations to an individual were utterly insignificant as compared with the success of the movement.

The irrational may do as much damage as the immoral to the health of a movement. When the first glamour has passed the rational element comes to the fore, and all that belonged to Fox's apocalyptic vision vanished like dreams of the night. So long as reason and love move in two separate realms, people will continue to mismanage the order of things and the possibilities of their neighbours. After the Renaissance the Franciscan type of asceticism could no longer be at home; it became retrograde. It revenged itself in manifold ways on anyone

¹ Swm. MSS., iii. 84.

who felt bound to drive away family obligations or political duties instead of *sublimating* them in a synthesis of reason and love. After his conversion, Nayler ran into excesses which were emotionally instead of rationally focused. As long as these two sides of life remain two separate things instead of becoming a living unity, the time is not yet ripe for the community ideal which Nayler and Rich believed in, and, theoretically, also Fox. Fox's balanced and commonsense point of view en-crusted this community idea for centuries, but saved it at the same time for a resurrection in a new age.

It is curious to see how the rôles had changed. Five years earlier, one who was an ex-officer and a spiritual leader had laid down all his advantages before a former cobbler, who was a religious genius and, although eight years his senior, Nayler had called Fox his spiritual father. Now he had been brought by suffering to such depths of soul that the former master was barely able to follow him. Fox, the prophet-chief, had still much left of the Old Testament; Nayler lived unconditionally in the New. It was from the other side of "the dark night of the soul" that he endeavoured to save his friend and former master from the ills wrought by hardness of heart.

In September 1659, Nayler was set free after nearly three years' imprisonment. Howgill, Whitehead, Rebecca Travers, and other London Friends welcomed him with great joy. But, as soon as possible, Nayler hurried to George Fox, who was now imprisoned at Reading. Fox was ill in mind and body, torn by a terrible inner struggle. He was bitterly disappointed in the Government, which had restricted religious liberty, and full of dread for the whole movement. For once in his life-time Fox was said to be thin and emaciated. He had not yet

fought to a finish, and he could never solve the problems piecemeal. He must be whole. All his circles had been disturbed, and it was Nayler's fault. Had not God Himself called Fox and spoken through him? He was not equally aware that this might be claimed also by Nayler. The hard metal of his soul, which in his youth had been made red-hot by a "consuming fire," had now turned to cold steel, no longer against strangers in the steeplehouses believing in old traditions instead of in the "seed," but against a friend who had suffered.

The demons were obviously busy: why should otherwise a company of "unclean spirits" – as usual, in the guise of women – have come to Fox a little earlier, saying that "ye plagues of God was upon mee but I told y^m Itt was ye same spiritt y^t saide soe to Christ: when hee was stricken & smitten." How differently did such words sound uttered by a middle-aged man instead of by an enthusiastic youth, who had no prestige to safeguard and had staked his whole life on awakening humanity?

When Nayler came, Fox refused to receive him. The policy of the closed door had also an official side: Nayler was still excommunicated. Nayler, however, was so emancipated in spirit that nothing could hurt him any longer. He had been turned out of the community to which his wife belonged, as he was now expelled from the Quaker circle. But he was living in such a universal community that expulsions could not make much difference to him.

"I suppose thou may have heard of my going to see our beloved G. F. at Ridding (Reading), which in tenderness of love I did, as soon as I was got out of prison, hearing he was not well: but I was not permitted to come where he was; which my adversary rejoiced at, that thereby he might add sorrow to



JAMES NAILOR.

JAMES NAYLER

From *Klachte der Quakers Overharen Niewen Martelaer*, 1657

affliction: – but my spirit was quieted, in that simplicity in which I went, in that to return: and [He] gave me His peace therein, as though I had had my desire.”¹

The next day was Sunday, and Nayler was present at the Friends’ meeting, without, however, saying a word. But he soon broke the silence, in spite of Fox’s prohibition. He did not do it in opposition, to “spite” him; it was simply the only right thing to do in his present position. He spoke not a word of reproach against Fox, however, for he had, as though silently walking onwards, from irresistible inward necessity, passed far beyond all reproach or contumely.

¹ *Letters of Early Friends*, p. 58.

A FREE BEING

"They to whom I had been a Wonder, looked upon me, and in thy Love I obtained Favour in those who had forsok me, then did Gladness swallow up sorrow."—J. N.

As one resurrected from the dead, Nayler came out from his prison to live again among the children of men. He came in his old clothes, with the scar which the branding had left on his forehead, and with the reputation of being a blasphemer and seducer. Formerly, when he was going to speak somewhere, he had been met by great expectations. Delight and approval awaited the famous leader as he stood up to address the meeting. Now people had changed their conceptions of him as they might change their clothes. The respectable Quakers now looked down from superior heights on a criminal, a blasphemer, and a transgressor against their community. Although many of them had suffered at the hands of the law, it was not because of evil deeds like Nayler's.

Wherever he went, however, it became wonderfully still. He had not only been in hell, but in paradise, and he carried it with him as a kingdom, possessing it even in prison. He went with his "foot lifted." He was like a bird, having the freedom of the whole atmosphere, unrestrained by bar or cage. If "search—find, fight—conquer" had been the rhythm of Fox's life, "sink—rise, soar—radiate," might be said to be that of Nayler's. The prejudices of others did not reach to the plane where he dwelt; they did not jar upon him. It happened occasionally

that people who had come to see him full of animosity or contempt were entirely disarmed, and even reduced to tears. His soul had no response to feelings of discord. He retaliated with that pure and emancipated love which is found only in him who has descended into Hades and risen again from the dead. Its most adequate name is perhaps peace.

It was not a passive peace, however, but the driving-power of a man indefatigably at work. James Nayler spoke in London to large crowds. Strangers also thronged to hear him, and the meeting-place in the Strand which he mostly frequented was packed. He spoke without pretensions and without shame, ready to undertake anything that was wanted. He wrote diligently, denouncing the Quaker persecutions in New England; refuting calmly and clearly pseudo-historical reports of his fanaticism, his blasphemy, and his loose habits; or publishing some imperishable letters dictated by his new experience.

Still politically alert, Nayler did not miss the opportunity of pleading for the Friends with Charles II immediately after his accession to the throne. In his letter to the king he pointed out how the things for which the Quakers had suffered persecution – refusal to take an oath, to show reverence to superiors, to pay tithes, etc. – had their root, *not* in lawlessness, but in obedience to an inner law. For the sake of this law “we are laid as the Mire in the Street, for every rude Boy to run over, and we have not found help from Man, as to all the Powers that have been till this Day since we were a People; nor do we speak this because we look for help from Man; nor indeed can we expect that from Men, until Men own the same Principle of God to rule in them to which we are subject, which is the *Son of Righteousness*, and leads all into Righteousness, Truth and

Peace, that his Light do follow, who is known to us to be King of Kings, and Judge of the Judges, though Flesh and Blood sees not his Kingdom.”¹

The same underlying thought that governed his idea of the Kingdom of God when he agreed to dramatise it in a borrowed and symbolic form was still present with him. There was no sign of its being blunted either from exhaustion, shame, or repentance. The Kingdom of God was his central idea.

After the Restoration it was far less opportune than during the Protectorate to defend liberty of conscience, its terrible consequences having since then been thoroughly exposed and debated. With his usual force, Nayler attacked the Governor of New England who, referring to the Anabaptists of Münster and to Nayler himself, ill-treated the Quakers, accusing them of political conspiracy. “What Plots have any one of them been found in since this present Government, against which many have been, and Opportunity hath not been wanting. . . . O men, be ashamed of your Words: Are not they known in *England*, to have been Men who generally did adventure Lives and Estates, with those who are in present Government, purchasing their Freedom as Men, with great Loss; and now seeing they cannot seek it that way, Do not they sit down and suffer, in the way of Christ, all that Man hath Power to inflict upon them. . . . And for the Blasphemies you tell on, Heresies and Sedition, What are they? Bring them forth into open View. . . . May not all that ever heard what you once fled from, out of *England*, stand amazed at this return? . . . And you tell of the actings of *Munster* being remembred by you; but sure it is for Imitation, for your Cruelty to those few who have come amongst you have not come short thereof.”

¹ *Works*, p. 598.

"You say, *One of them press'd much for a Conference, with one of your Teachers*, but say you, *the Quaker was quickly weary*. And presently you say, *That unless your Court do make a Law, to banish them, and not to return upon Pain of Death, you cannot be rid of them*. . . . Can one of your Teachers so quickly weary out one, and might not then all your Teachers rid you of Six (for that is all the Number you tell on from *England*) In a more noble way, and more suitable to the Authority of the Spirit, and Power of Christ Jesus, than to cut their Ears, and banish and kill them?"¹

When Captain George Bishop of Bristol tried to refute what R. Farmer had said, not about Nayler, but about the Quakers, he mentioned in the introduction the past life of him whom also Bishop in a letter believed to have come into Bristol "to set up his image and to break the truth in pieces."² "What mouth was there (then) opened against him that he did not condemn? What Pen replied again when he had answered? . . . What weapon formed against him prospered? How did he tread upon the high places of the Earth? How was he raised up from the North? . . . A man, a valiant man in the Wars from first to last, whose sword the Lord prospered, and whose life he preserved; yet how hath he suffered?"³

Suffering, however, had not blunted Nayler's sharpness of wit or his interest in general questions. As soon as life demanded it, he was still a fighter, though with spiritual weapons.

The memoirs of Thomas Ellwood, Milton's private secretary, give us a glimpse of James Nayler towards the end of 1659. Ellwood's father, who was much opposed to the Quakers, had nevertheless accepted a family invitation to visit the

¹ *Works*, pp. 739 ff.

² Letter to M. F., *Nayleriana*, p. 21.

³ George Bishop: *The Throne of Truth Exalted*, p. 3.

country house of his old and respected friend, Isaac Penington, who had joined the Quakers in 1658.

"It was in the tenth month, in the year 1659, that we went thither, where we found a very kind reception, and tarried some days; one day at least the longer, for that while we were there a meeting was appointed at a place about a mile from thence, to which we were invited to go, and willingly went.

"It was held in a farm-house called the Grove, which having formerly been a gentleman's seat, had a very large hall, and that well filled.

"To this meeting came Edward Burrough, besides other preachers, as Thomas Curtis and James Naylor, but none spoke there at that time but Edward Burrough, next to whom, as it were under him, it was my lot to sit on a stool by the side of a long table on which he sat, and I drank in his words with desire; for they not only answered my understanding, but warmed my heart with a certain heat, which I had not till then felt from the ministry of any man.

"When the meeting was ended our friends took us home with them again; and after supper, the evenings being long, the servants of the family (who were Quakers) were called in, and we all sat down in silence. But long we had not so sat before Edward Burrough began to speak among us. And although he spoke not long, yet what he said did touch, as I suppose, my father's (religious) copyhold, as the phrase is. And he having been from his youth a professor, though not joined in that which is called close communion with any one sort, and valuing himself upon the knowledge he esteemed himself to have in the various notions of each profession, thought he had now a fair opportunity to display

his knowledge, and thereupon began to make objections against what had been delivered.

"The subject of the discourse was 'The universal free grace of God to all mankind,' to which he opposed the Calvinistic tenet of particular and personal predestination; in defence of which indefensible notion he found himself more at a loss than he expected. Edward Burrough said not much to him upon it, though what he said was close and cogent; but James Naylor interposing, handled the subject with so much perspicuity and clear demonstration, that his reasoning seemed to be irresistible; and so I suppose my father found it, which made him willing to drop the discourse.

"As for Edward Burrough, he was a brisk young man, of a ready tongue, and might have been, for aught I then knew, a scholar, which made me the less to admire his way of reasoning. But what dropt from James Naylor had the greater force upon me, because he looked but like a plain simple countryman, having the appearance of a husbandman or a shepherd.

"As my father was not able to maintain the argument on his side, so neither did they seem willing to drive it to an extremity on their side; but treating him in a soft and gentle manner, did after a while let fall the discourse, and then we withdrew to our respective chambers."¹

Ellwood's early recollections show a marked contrast to the debates in the steeplehouses seven years before. Naylor was not the principal speaker, and it was obvious that he was not in the limelight. Only when everybody had had their turn, and when it was really needed, did he stand up to speak. Ellwood was evidently not quite able to account for

¹ From *The History of Thomas Ellwood, written by himself*. (London, 1885, Morley's Universal Library), pp. 24 ff.

the deep impression that Nayler made on him. As Whitehead was particularly struck with Nayler's silence and conscientiousness when, rather than go beyond his experience, he cut himself short as he was going to explain a difficult passage, so Ellwood put down his emotion to the strange contrast between Nayler's apparel and his personality. Burrough, young and passionate, was nearer Ellwood both in age and upbringing, and, like him, Ellwood was to be disowned by his family when he joined the despised Quaker movement. Nayler, however, who had commanded men in the army, who had spoken and disputed before breathlessly enthralled audiences, who had been worshipped and condemned, had now reached a simplicity which, if not that of the peasant or the shepherd, was beyond all classes and systems.

“THE DAY OF MERCY”

Then from the conqueror we turn away,
And give our love to him who lost the day.

After VICTOR RYDBERG.

It is strange to think of a preacher, who had begun his attack on the powers of this world by refusing to remove his hat, coming to insist stubbornly that a man shall kneel down before him, and being unsatisfied even with this tribute. The evil one plays many ironic pranks with him who goes out with “the claim of the ideal” in his coat-tail pocket. There are others besides Nayler who have had to take part in a caricature performance of their own lives. Others also besides Fox. Maybe it is something that must befall each one of us.

Fox arrived in London during February 1660, while Monck’s army was marching on the city, ravaging and devastating it for the cause of Charles II. He met Howgill and Burrough, but Nayler, who was again the soul of the London work and whom people flocked to hear, was as so much thin air to Fox. Nayler’s friend from home, however, William Dewsbury, did not rest until something was done. He travelled from Yorkshire on purpose to bring about a reconciliation between Fox and Nayler. They *must* meet. Dewsbury had lived in perpetual anguish, and at last, “in fulness of time,” he was led to London to bring about a meeting between the two. He lived to see how that “He healed up the breach,” and how a powerful spirit of wisdom and reconciliation rested over the meeting. “A healing

spirit did abound within them . . . and dear J. N. the Lord was with him.”¹

Fox’s journal does not refer to this event. Robert Rich again could not look upon it as just nor as a cause for rejoicing. He felt almost that his “dear lamb” was doing wrong. It was so topsy-turvy that Nayler was the only scapegoat who had to do penance. Rich kept silence about this for years, his dear lamb probably wishing it to be so, but at last he could not contain himself any longer, and, when a similar conflict occurred in 1678, he spoke his mind.

“Moreover, didst not thou G. F. and thy friends, still continue your enmity towards him, so long, till for love and peace sake he bowed down to thee, making himself of no reputation, yea, sin, that knew none, rather than ye by continuing your enmity against him should destroy your souls whom he so much loved; and was not this, think ye, the mind of Christ Jesus in J. N. which ye call his weakness, fall and recantation, which nevertheless these Scriptures (viz. Phil. 2. 5 and 6 and 7, I Cor. 2. 16, Rom. 15. 3 and 9. 3, 2 Cor. 5. 21) call his strength and his conformity to Christ.

“When G. F. offered to J. N. his hand, and afterwards his foot to kiss, whether J. N. in falling down and worshipping, had not given that honour to man which belongs to God alone; which honour the faithless generation gives and receives one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God alone: and when James Nayler and several others went down upon their knees before G. F. to confess (as divers have reported that were eye-witnesses) and what my self have seen . . . is not this to worship men, which is Idolatry.”

“R. Rich to G. F.”²

¹ Quoted from Braithwaite, p. 274.

² *Hidden Things*, pp. 37, 40.

Rich’s honest and proud soul shuddered before this self-abasement. At the same time he understood that Nayler had some peculiar quality which gave meaning even to the irrational. What happened on this “day of mercy” was really something paradoxical: Nayler bestowed on Fox the most supreme mercy that one man can show to another, and this Rich’s loving eye dimly perceived. Otherwise nobody seemed to grasp the inner truth of what happened. Its melody, which must have reached up to Paradise, found no earthly ear attuned to hear it. It was pitched too high.

“In humility we find a Power above Pride, higher than Oppression.”¹

Fox gave the following account of what had taken place: “ye Lord God moved mee to sleight him & to sett ye power of God over him.

“And when hee was come to London his resistinge ye power of God In mee . . . became one of his greatest burdens butt hee came to see it & to condemne it & all his outgoeings.”²

In passing, he referred to Nayler’s own confessions and recantations, which were treacherous indictments of a generous soul, who had laid guilt on himself without in any way betraying the guilt of another.

Wistfulness, pity, perhaps a glimpse of humour, would probably have passed over Nayler’s face, if he had lived long enough to be able to read these words, written many years afterwards. Perhaps he felt the same spirit at the meeting. Unseen and misunderstood, he wished perhaps to offer his former “father” this token of love, filled with intense suffering, just as a mother or father may ostensibly receive a favour from a child the very moment that they offer unstintingly of their own abundance.

¹ *Works*, p. 402.

² *Journal*, i. 244.

This readmittance, with kneeling and other ceremonial, to which Nayler, in his utter forgetfulness of self, submitted for the sake of the communion, so filled him with exultation, that it overflowed and burst into song. He used the strain of the Psalms, but the experience was his own.

It is in my Heart to praise thee,

O my God, let me never forget thee
What thou hast been to me in the Night,
by thy Presence in the Day of Tryal,
When I was beset in Darkness,

When I was cast out as a Wandering Bird . . .

When the Floods sought to sweep me away,
thou set a Compass for them, how far they should pass
over . . .

When the Weight of the Hills was upon me
thou upheld'st me,
Else had I sunk under the Earth. . . .

When I went on the Way of Wrath,
and passed by the Gates of Hell;
When all comforts stood afar off,
and he that is mine Enemy had Dominion; . . .

. . . When I was between the Millstones,
and as one crushed with the Weight of his Adversary,
as a Father thou wast with me,
and the Rock of thy Presence.

When the Mouths of Lyons roared against me,
and Fear took hold on my Soul in the Pit:
then I called upon thee in the Night,
and my Cries were strong before thee daily,
Who answeredst me from thy Habitation,
saying: "*I will set thee above all thy Fears,
and lift thy Feet above the Head of Oppression.*"

I believed, and was strengthened,
and thy Word was Salvation.

Thou didst fight on my Part,
When I wrestled with Death;

And when Darkness would have shut me up,
then thy Light shone about me,
And thy Banner was over my Head.

When my Work was in the Furnace,
and as I passed through the Fire,
by thee I was not consumed,
though the Flames ascended above my Head.

When I beheld the dreadful Visions,
and was amongst the Fiery Spirits –
thy Faith stayed me;
else through Fear I had fallen
I saw thee and believed
so the Enemy could not prevail.

When I look back into thy Works,
I am astonished, and see no End of thy Praises:
Glory, Glory to thee, saith my Soul . . .

In the Deep didst thou shew me Wonders,
and the Forming of the World. . . .
Then did the Heavens shower down . . .
and thy Glory descended.
Thou filledst the Lower Parts of the Earth with Gladness,
and the Springs of the Valleys were opened. . . .
Thou madest thy Plant to spring,
and the Thirsty Soul became as a watered Garden.

Then didst thou lift me out of the Pit,
and set me forth in the Sight of my Enemies.
Thou proclaimed'st Liberty to the Captive,
and called'st my Acquaintance near me,
They to whom I had been a Wonder,
looked upon me,
and in thy Love I obtained Favour
in those who had forsook me.

Then did Gladness swallow up Sorrow,
and I forsook all my Troubles.
And I said:
How good is it that Man be proved in the Night,
that he may know his Folly,
that every Mouth may become Silent
in thy Hand,
until Thou makest Man known to himself,
and hast slain the Boaster,
and shewed him the Vanity that vexeth thy Spirit.¹

¹ *Works*, pp. xlix ff.

*Hybris*¹ was conquered, not in isolation and resignation, but in joyful giving and communion. God's flowers were opening out in the garden of the soul. It was not a starlit winter's night in the endless space of darkness and death; it was resurrection and spring and rejoicing.

Although this song is comparatively little known, the experience underlying it belongs to the very deepest in the history of religion, and is worthy of being placed side by side with the *Song of the Sun* of St. Francis and with *The Dark Night* of St. John of the Cross. Every line is so saturated with meaning as to deserve an exposition of its own.

The supreme question is not whether man can believe in God in his utmost misery, but whether God can believe in man. Can the inner God rise victoriously, when events in the outer world speak with the hollow and forlorn voice of despair?

He who has lived through "the second death," and who has not shrivelled into dust at the unveiling of that which dwells in the children of men, but has risen up, in spite of it all, and lived and gone about, proclaiming new wonders – he has been loosed for ever from the fetters of time, and speaks to us in the language of eternity: "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

¹ See note on p. 121.

THE WAY HOME

“Take heed of what Exalteth it self above its Brother;
but keep low, and serve one another in Love.”¹

THIS is the law of humility, subject to which Nayler goes forward, appealing to the “life of God in all.” He goes, as Miss Brailsford writes, “in and out at the meetings like another apostle with the message: Children, love one another.” But his message of love was closely interwoven with one which might be formulated thus: “Be honest with one another.”

An opponent of the Quakers had once disparagingly said: “They have no other authority than the spirit within them.” Nothing could better describe Nayler’s “authority” after his imprisonment. There were some who did not discern his spiritual grandeur but one of those who had perceived it called him “a holy ambassador from the King of Kings.” The holy ambassador had nothing overbearing in his manner. He was no prophet calling down judgment on earth. He was more like “Il Poverello” of Assisi. He had no insignia and no dignity to hide “ye babe in ye.” Unsheltered and free, he wandered out under the open sky. He carried his intellectual powers with him. To him, prayer and fresh seeking after truth went together. The poverty which he above all pursued was the naked honesty of his soul, renouncing every protective disguise. As St. Francis found that accumulated possessions weighed heavily on living souls, so did Nayler dread accumulated opinions. He dedicated his life to the honest poverty of the spirit, with all its risks and mistakes.

¹ *Works*, p. 20.

Shortly after the "Day of Mercy" in London, Nayler set out for Bristol, where his antagonists were most numerous, for he wished to make public confession there also. He did it probably in words similar to those of his "recantation," with an intense desire to let his own experiences be a help to his hearers: "But condemned for ever be all those False Worshipps, with which any have Idolized my Person in the night of my Temptation, when the Power of Darkness was above; All their Casting off their Cloaths in the Way, their Bowings and Singings, and all the Rest of those wild Actions which did any way tend to dishonour the Lord."¹ "And as far as I gave Advantage, through want of judgment, for that evil Spirit in any to arise, I take Shame to my self justly, having formerly had Power over that Spirit in Judgment and Discerning where-ever it was."²

"And it is in my Heart to confess to God, and before Men, my Folly and Offence in that Day; yet was there many Things formed against me at that Day to take away my Life, and cast upon the Truth of which I am not guilty at all."³

"And this further is given me to say to every particular Person, to whom this Writing shall come, whatever is thy Condition, wait in the Light which lets thee see it. . . . Art thou tempted to Sin? Abide in that which lets thee see it, that there thou mayst come to feed on the Right Body, and not on the Temptation; for if thou mindest the Temptation it will overcome thee, but in the Light is Salvation: Or having sinned, art thou tempted to despair or to destroy thy self? Mind not the Temptation, for it's Death that Sin hath brought forth; feed not on it nor mind it, least thou eatest Condemnation, for that's the wrong Body.

"Art thou in Darkness? Mind it not; for if thou

¹ *Works*, p. lii.

² *Ibid.*, p. liii.

³ *Ibid.*, liv.

do'st, it will fill thee more; but stand still and act not, and wait in Patience till Light arise out of Darkness to lead thee. Art thou wounded in Conscience? Feed not there, but abide in the Light which leads to the Grace and Truth, which teaches to deny and put off the Weight, and removes the Cause, and brings saving Health to light . . . though thou hast made thy Grave as deep as the nethermost Hell, or were thy Afflictions as great as Job's, and thy Darkness as the Depth of the Sea, yet if thou wilt not run to vain Helps as I have done, but stay upon the Lord, till he give thee Light by his Word . . . from thence will he bring thee forth, and his Eye shall guide thee, and thou shalt Praise his Name, as I do this Day, Glory for evermore!

"And had'st thou Gifts, Revelations, Knowledge, Wisdom, or whatever thou canst read of in the Scriptures of Truth, and dost not abide in the Light, and feed on the Body of Christ, whence the Gifts spring, but feed on the Gift, thou may'st be up for a while in thy own Sight, but certainly thou wilt wither and die to God, and Darkness will come upon thee, and thy Food will turn to thy Condemnation in the Sight of God.

"And this I have learned in the Deeps, and in secret, when I was alone, and now declare openly in the Day of my mercy."¹

Nayler had met with harsh treatment as well as with warm sympathy from the Bristol Friends. He cannot have found it easy to speak in this atmosphere. Sewel, however, the earliest Quaker historian, had been told by several eye-witnesses that hardly anyone in the hall could refrain from tears.

Nayler worked chiefly in London during these months, attracting large congregations of different people, many of them non-Quakers. Instead of the

¹ *Works*, pp. lv.-lvi.

former admiration and enthusiasm, he now evoked strange and deep emotions.

Fox suggested in a letter, however, that it would be advisable for Nayler to leave the capital and retire to some country district like "Bishopric," i.e. Durham. It may be worth pointing out that Judge Pearson, who had been one of Nayler's converts, now lived in Durham, having altogether broken with the Friends and become a confirmed Anglican. Fox's request came in July 1660. Hubberthorne answered him that it seemed both to Nayler and to himself that Nayler's presence would be more beneficial in London, but that he placed himself entirely at Fox's disposal. "At present here is a great service for him, and several great ones have a desire to hear him at Woodcock's. . . . We have drawn some from that meeting, because it was so full, and many that are great in the outward resort thither,"¹ wrote Hubberthorne generously in unalloyed happiness.

Fox must have insisted that his wish should be carried out, although any such letter has probably been destroyed. Nayler, who lived in a world where one is always free, took the order as leave to go home to his wife and children. It must therefore have been welcome to him, even if he dreaded to return, disfigured and scarred, to his family and his old surroundings.

Once again it was a day in October, and he walked along the muddy roads, wet weather having followed the sultry heat of the summer, with its many epidemics.

"He was seen by a Friend of Hertford, sitting by the wayside in a very awful weighty frame of mind." It is the first time that anybody mentions that James Nayler gave an "awful" impression. Was it the mark of death? Was it that, having been compelled to go

¹ *Letters of Early Friends*, p. 83.

a mile, he who had never in his life been cowardly or servile had had the strength to go two? Was it that he understood that the man he had once called "father" was now the child, and that he had to take it upon himself to act as a father, unseen, misunderstood, alone? Not even Rich could follow him on these roads, although, in far-off Barbados, he was the only one in the world who *knew*.

The Friend in Hertford invited Nayler to his home, but Nayler declined, saying that he must go further. He walked on foot as far as Huntingdonshire, where Cromwell had first seen the light of day, he who by this time was dead, whose body had been reviled, and whose power had passed into other hands.

"And so he went on foot as far as Huntingdonshire. And was observed by a Friend as he passed through the town, in such an awful frame as if he had been redeemed from the earth and a stranger on it, seeking a better Country and inheritance. But going some miles beyond Huntingdon, he was taken ill, being as it is said, robbed by the way, and left bound; whether he received any personal injury is not certainly known. But being found in a field by a countryman toward evening, was had, or went to a Friend's house at Holm, not far from King's Rippon, where Thomas Parnel, a doctor of physick dwelt, who came to visit him; and being asked, if any friends at London should be sent for to come and see him said, Nay – expressing his care and love to them. Being shifted, he said: 'You have refreshed my body, the Lord refresh your souls'; and not long after departed this life, in peace with the Lord."¹

A couple of hours before his death, he gave as a legacy a few words, which are full to the brim of

¹ Quoted by Sewel and M. R. Brailsford from the record of John Whiting.

intense experience, and the most beautiful expression of the infinity of the human spirit.

"There is a Spirit which I feel, that delights to do no Evil, nor to revenge any Wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the End: Its hope is to outlive all Wrath and Contention, and to weary out all Exaltation and Cruelty, or whatever is of a Nature contrary to it self. It sees to the End of all Temptations: As it bears no Evil in it self, so it conceives none in Thoughts to any other: If it be betrayed it bears it; for its Ground and Spring is the Mercies and Forgiveness of God. Its Crown is Meekness, its Life is Everlasting Love unfeigned, and takes its Kingdom with Intreaty, and not with Contention, and keeps it by Lowliness of Mind. In God alone it can rejoyce, though none else regard it, or can own its Life. It's conceived in Sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at Grief and Oppression. It never rejoyceth, but through Sufferings; for with the World's Joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken; I have Fellowship therein, with them who lived in Dens, and desolate Places in the Earth, who through Death obtained this Resurrection and Eternal Holy Life.

"J. N."¹

As in the legends of ancient relics, Nayler's remains were buried where they were left, in a small garden belonging to his last physician and friend in King's Ripton on the 21st of October, 1660.

There is no stone to mark the place, but only a garden.

¹ *Works*, p. 696.

EPILOGUE

“THE dear James Nayler” – with what unspeakable tenderness did not those who knew him personally speak of him. The “First Publishers” died, however, one after another, many of them in terrible prisons.

The years between 1660 and 1689 were years of persecution, leaving deep scars not only on the Quakers, but also on others who, in spite of changed conditions, clung to their ideals from the days of the Civil War. The ranks of the pious closed more and more against anything that savoured of politics, for they had, as it were, been burnt by a dangerous fire. “The Kingdom of the Saints upon earth, from this period, gently vanished from their sight, and indeed, from history also like a mirage of the desert,”¹ writes Professor Weingarten of this phase.

James Nayler’s name was in a peculiar way bound up with political life, and it is curious to see how his memory fades as the political interest in the Quaker world gradually dies down. Robert Rich remained faithful to the memory of his friend until the last. Shortly before Nayler’s death he went out to Barbados, where he generously supported imprisoned Quakers. After the Great Fire of London in 1666, he sent a large sum of money to the assistance of distressed Quakers. But “Judas and his thirty silver pennies” were not accepted by Fox. When Rich returned to London after having been absent for twenty years, he visited the meeting-places where Nayler had been wont to speak. In gaudy apparel,

¹ Quoted from R. Barclay: *Inner Life*, p. 426.

he walked about in the halls, telling the young about Nayler, comparing himself to "the dog who licked Lazarus's sores" and "the speaking ass" who had to reproach the leaders.

Thirty years after his death, Nayler was still referred to with kindness, although not without hesitancy, in a published collection of letters written by "the First Publishers": "His understanding was darkened, and he became veiled. But he soon came to a sight thereof and repented; and afterward in great Humility travailed in the Worke the Lord of . . . so I cannot wel pas by but insert the letters or Epistles given forth by him to the Lord's people."¹

During George Fox's life-time no collection of Nayler's writings appeared in print, but several years after Fox's death, George Whitehead published an edition of Nayler's most important works, in 1716.

In her memoirs, published after her death in 1710, Margaret Fell, the widow of Fox, gives a detailed account of how the first Quaker message came to Swarthmore Hall, but without even mentioning Nayler by name. Fox's unbending silence had tied her also, although she had written such warm and affectionate words to Nayler even in his years of sorrow, and although her first husband, Judge Fell, must have valued him. According to her version, Farnsworth "and some others" succeeded in calming her indignant husband that memorable afternoon at Swarthmore Hall, and her letters had been written to Howgill "and others" in the prison at Appleby. Nayler was no longer an individual in her world; he was only "another." We find exactly the same thing occurring in the published writings of Burrough and Howgill, where Fox's influence is strongly felt. They describe a particular period of

¹ T. Thompson's copies, p. 170.

Quaker activity in London, mentioning every visit of Fox to the capital, whereas there is only to be found a short, almost accidental, reference to Nayler.¹

There were many who, like Colonel Sydenham, held that the shame of Nayler's punishment lay in Parliament, and not in him who was condemned. But as the years went by, all those who retained their ideals from the Revolution, against the new régime, "are come into exceedingly great contempt." And the greater the lapse of time, the more are people inclined to think that a Parliament is more respectable than an individual. The Quakers came to look upon Nayler so much as a solemn warning to hold themselves "within their measure" that they covered up the great living fire which had wrought such havoc when he went "beyond his measure."

Those who had never known Nayler, and never thought of reading his writings, found it an easy matter to construct a picture of him, after schedule patterns, as "a crazy fellow," to whom Parliament had paid too much attention, but who otherwise did not deserve to be remembered.

The Rector at Woodchurch, the Rev. T. Reynolds, kindly informs me that the entry of James Nayler's name in *The Registers of Topcliffe and Morley*, London, 1888, has occasioned the following note: "Naylor, the mad Quaker. — James Naylor, the Quaker enthusiast, was originally a member of the Church at Topcliffe. He was brought before the Church on a charge of adultery. The meeting was held at Hagus Hall, in the room called the Lord's parlour. Naylor went afterwards to London and joined the Baptist

¹ Nayler's initials are crossed over in several letters, amongst others in one where he calls Fox his father, and in a letter from Humphrey Norton (see *Journal*, i. 246). Is it not possible that the anonymous "publeck leter" (*Journal*, i. 116) was written by Nayler?

Church of which Hanserd Knollys was minister, whence he was again expelled."

These statements, of which every single one is false, except that he was accused and possibly that the session was held in Hagus Hall, are not far from representing the general opinion of James Nayler. It was not surprising that it became less and less respectable to have been connected with him. Nevertheless, somebody has nearly always come forward, at shorter or longer intervals, to recall the memory of his real self.

There was a moment in English history when a group of social and humanitarian problems were intuitively solved, and when the ideas of the Reformation blazed up in a new realisation of the soul, and in a vision of "the new kingdom" based on the Gospels. As it happened, the Quakers retained more of this extraordinary experience than any others. They consistently held up their religion as a mirror for the life of both the individual and the group. For centuries they have refused to take an oath. They have been the first to insist on the need for prison reform. They abolished slavery before the slave war. After the short creative years, up till 1656, their conquests were so securely encased within the life of the isolated group that they did not again come to the fore until the Great War, in aggressive opposition to the whole idea and essence of war. What these opponents lost in "respectability" during the war years, they gained in religious depth and in new faith in their particular contribution to history.

It is interesting to note how James Nayler, this peculiar Quaker, who was at best regarded as a type of eccentricity during the period of respectable isolation, and as a warning to others, with this new political outlook begins to ascend above the horizon.

He is what Eckhart would call *ein Klettermensch*, one who bursts all bounds, and whose influence still persists, even when he has been in a double sense buried – in the bosom of the earth and in ice-cold silence.

NOTES

POSTHUMOUS FAME

The quotations are taken from *Pantheon Anabaptisticum*. See *Bibliography*.

POLITICS AND RELIGION

p. 15. "Your Majesty would be misinformed if any man should deliver that the Kings of England have any absolute power in themselves either to alter religion, or to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than as in temporal causes, by consent of Parliament." – Apology of the Commons, 1604. From J. R. Green: *Short History of the English People*, iii. 984.

p. 17. The anecdote relating to Lilburne is from Gardiner: *The Great Civil War*, iii. 245. The House of Commons is called "The Supreme Authority of England." The question whether regent or Parliament should give the decisive vote in matters of controversy is left open. Cf. the chapter on *Nayler, Cromwell, and the Crown*.

THE SPIRITUAL SEARCH

Lilburne's Declaration, from Tuke: *Biographical Notices*, ii. 103.

JAMES NAYLER, THE SOLDIER

p. 36. John Deacon: *An Exact History of the life of James Nayler*, p. 4.

p. 39. Quotations from *Some Considerations needful to be taken into mind by such as are in Place to Ease the Oppressed*. See Nayler's *Works*, p. 750.

p. 40. Nayler describes himself somewhat vaguely as a "husbandman." After his conversion to Quakerism, a

large landowner like Colonel Benson used the same term as applicable to himself. See Braithwaite: *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 92.

According to the parish register, Nayler's three elder children were daughters. John Nayler, who acted as "his father's" executor, is described as the son of James Nayler, which seems almost incredible if he was born after 1650. The executor laments that the widow and five children received all and that he was given nothing for his trouble, which seems to show that he was not one of them. I have nowhere else found any allusion to the circumstance that Nayler should have other children besides the three daughters. Either the word son is a misstatement, or Anne Nayler must have had children in a previous marriage who called Nayler "father," or the executorship concerned an entirely different person. According to the Rector of Woodchurch, Nayler is a fairly common name in this district. I have not been able to find any information regarding Anne Nayler's antecedents. Her petition to the Government during Nayler's imprisonment indicates that she had some education. The statement in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that Nayler after his return had not lived with his wife seems to me the most probable, but I have failed to find any evidence for it.

The account of the executor is printed in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, x. 23. There is an entry in the marriage register of Ulrum Meeting House from 1668 of the marriage of Mary Nayler, who fits in with one of Nayler's daughters. Anne Nayler, the mother, is also the first of the witnesses, amongst whom are two Thomas Naylers, senior and junior.

p. 40. Firth writes that Cromwell's own regiment largely consisted of those who had served under Fairfax, 1645-50, and who had taken part in the Civil War from the beginning. This is in accordance with Nayler's own statement that he had served under Fairfax and Lambert, whereas he does not mention Cromwell as one of his generals.

As to "Regulations to the quartering of soldiers,"

May 1646, see Appendix in Firth: *Cromwell's Army*. Who was quartermaster-general? This I have not been able to find. Could it possibly have been Nayler? Lambert speaks of "my quartermaster." One of Cromwell's brothers, as well as the future Major-General Desborough, was at one time quartermaster, the lowest rank, besides the cornet, of commissioned officers.

p. 41. One would like to know whether Lambert's testimony to Nayler's usefulness only concerned his military duties or had some reference to his influence over the men also politically.

p. 42. See Fox's *Journal*, i. 385, in connection with the Battle of Dunbar.

pp. 42-3. From the *Memoirs* of James Gough, Dublin, 1782.

p. 43. At the time when Nayler was in the foreground, the Quakers were often suspected of being Levellers. Nayler's neighbour and friend, Richard Hubbertorne, visited Lilburne in prison. Nayler was closely associated with Calvert and his sister and brother-in-law. It was Calvert who printed Lilburne's and Winstanley's as well as Nayler's own writings. He became later a Quaker.

THE DISCOVERY OF GEORGE FOX

p. 46. See Fox's *Journal*, bicentenary edition, i. 3.

p. 47. Rufus M. Jones, in his *Studies in Mystical Religion*, shows Fox as being heir to the Anabaptists.

p. 49. *Journal*, bicentenary edition, i. 12, 13, 28.

pp. 50 ff. *Journal*, i. 335, 74, 331, 333, 88, 73. The expression "The light of Christ in man is his way to Christ" was F. Howgill's version of Fox's words.

THE YOUNG PROPHET

Norman Penney's investigations, in *The First Publishers of Truth*, prove that, in each instance, Fox's attacks were launched, not against the then persecuted and

down-trodden Anglicans, but against the "priests and professors" of the triumphing Puritans.

p. 66. Behrens has pointed out the connection between Gerrard Winstanley's earlier teaching and the dissolved Baptist community at Balby, which is generally regarded as the first Quaker group.

p. 67. When Winstanley and Everard had an audience with Fairfax in order to plead the cause of the Diggers, they kept their hats on. When asked the reason for their extraordinary behaviour, they answered: "He is our fellow creature." This was the first time that the hat question had the character of a democratic confession of faith, which afterwards was usual, especially with the Quakers.

In Winstanley's writings the doctrine of the Inner Light is much in evidence: "And similarly it is the ruling of the spirit of Jesus Christ, the Inward Light, within the hearts of man, not the sufferings of the man Christ Jesus, which is the essential condition of individual and social salvation."¹ The absolute insistence on Immanence, as well as the fight against tithes, is found in Winstanley.

Compare the following extracts from Winstanley's writings with early Quaker literature, especially Naylor's pamphlets: "So that you do not look for a God now, as formerly you did, to be a place of glory beyond the sun, moon, and stars, nor imagine a Divine Being you know not where; but you see Him ruling within you; and not only in you, but you see and know Him to be the Spirit or Power that dwells in every man and woman, yea, in every creature, according to its orb, within the globe of the Creation. So that now you see and feel and taste the sweetness of the Spirit ruling in your flesh, who is the Lord and King of Glory in the whole Creation, and you have community with Him who is the Father of all things. Now you are enlightened; now you are saved, and rise higher and higher into life and peace, as this manifestation of the Father increases and spreads within you."²

¹ Behrens: *The Digger Movement*, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

According to Winstanley, both heaven and hell are within us. "Whosoever worships God by hearsay, as others tell him, and knows not what God is from light within himself; or that thinks God is in the heavens above the skies, and so prays to that God which he imagines to be there and everywhere, but from any testimony within, he knows not how nor where; this man worships his own imagination, which is the Devil. But he who is a true worshipper must know who God is and how He is to be worshipped, from the Power of Light shining within him, if ever he have true peace. . . . Hence a report is raised, and is frequent in the mouth of the teachers, that I deny God. Therefore, first, I shall give account of what I see and know Him to be; and the understanding in heart judge me."¹

Winstanley found the word God so misused and so hidden by wrong ideas that he searched for other names. When he used "Reason" he did so not only in a rationalistic but in a mystic sense. Cf. Neo-Platonism.

In *Truth lifting up its Head above Scandals*, printed 1648, the following questions and answers occur²:

"Q. When can a man call the Father his God?

"A. When he feels and sees, by experience, that the Spirit which made the flesh doth govern and rule king in his flesh. And so can say, I rejoice to feel and see my flesh made subject to the Spirit of Righteousness.

"Q. But may not a man call Him God till he have this experience?

"A. No, for if he do, he lies, and there is no truth in him. . . .

"Q. But I hope that the Father is my Governor, and therefore may I not call Him God?

"A. Hope without ground is the hope of a hypocrite."

The parallels might be multiplied.

Several members of the Army Council were favourable to Winstanley's programme of agrarian reform, e.g. Wildman, a friend of Anthony Pearson and of John

¹ Behrens: *The Digger Movement*, p. 63.

² Ibid., p. 64. Cf. the title of Nayler's tract *Truth cleared from Scandals*.

Lilburne, Sexby and other representatives of the rank and file. In *A New Year's Gift for the Parliament and the Army*, sent out by Winstanley in the beginning of 1650, he described the destitution of the poor and recorded the sufferings inflicted by the authorities on the Diggers. It seems probable that Winstanley's influence lay behind the request to record persecutions, which Fox dispatched to the various Quaker Centres.

The Lollards, with their Franciscan dye in the grain, showed even earlier a policy of linking up the questions of agrarian reform, disarmament, and religious teaching. Fox laid stress on disarming the individual, but he did not touch upon the acute land question.

The chronology as regards Nayler's inner experience and the visit of Fox is difficult to ascertain. Not even during the period of their most intimate friendship did Nayler refer to his call as being the direct outcome of Fox's influence. Cf. Sewel and Braithwaite. Fox writes in his *Journal* for 1651: "I passt uppe & doune & had meetinges amongst ffreindely people in severall places. . . . preachinge repentans & ye worde of life to y^m: & went Into ye Country about Wakefeilde where James Naylor lived, where hee & Tho: Goodyeere was convict & Will: Dewsbury: & many more." Fox was, however, too full of his own message to say much of what others had experienced, apart from it.

p. 73. John Deacon on Nayler's possessions. As far as I have been able to ascertain, no letters written by Nayler and his wife to each other are preserved. Also several of the original MSS. on which Barclay has based his *Letters of Early Friends* seem to be lost. There is all the time something mysterious and contradictory in everything that concerns Nayler's family circumstances. Deacon quotes Dewsbury in order to reveal Nayler's opinions.

p. 74. Nayler, who had in a sense been an intellectualist, stresses after his conversion the way of inspiration. "*So ist sein Kopf nur das Eingeweide seines Herzens*," as Nietzsche puts it. This anti-intellectualism becomes

differently focused in Nayler than in Fox, as a result of the former's past experiences.

BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

p. 77. *Memoirs* are, according to the information given on the title-page, written by a non-Quaker as an antidote to the poisonous attacks of Nayler's enemies and to the silence of his friends. On the same page, Nayler is referred to as "That very eminent person."

p. 78. The probability that Anne Nayler, after her husband's death, allowed one of her daughters to marry a Friend and, besides representatives of well-known Quaker families, acted as witness at the wedding, may indicate that she embraced Quakerism.

p. 79. Regarding Richard Farnsworth, see *Letters of Early Friends*, pp. 216, 167.

p. 79. In those days, when petitions were constantly sent up to the Army Council, Farnsworth addressed *An Easter-reckoning; or, A Free-will Offering* "To the right honourable, the General of the Army, whose name is the mighty Counsellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace" and "To the valiant Souldiery of the Army of the Lamb." The analogy has a sting, akin to the challenge thrown by primitive Christianity at the titles and attributes of the Imperial cult.

It is sometimes difficult to decide whether the expression "my father" in Nayler's letters refer to Fox or have a religious significance.

p. 80. According to Margaret Fell,¹ her husband Thomas Fell "was a Barrister-at-Law of Grays-Inn . . . a Member of Parliament, in several Parliaments; Vice-Chancellor of the County Palatine of Lancaster, Chancellor of the Dutchy-Court at Westminster, and one of the Judges that went the Circuit of West-Chester, and North-Wales. He was much esteemed . . . by all sorts of people for his Justice, Wisdom, Moderation and Mercy."

¹ Margaret Fell: *Works*, 1710, p. 1.

p. 80. The name Quaker – derived from *quake*, tremble – originated, according to Fox, in the disparaging remark of a hostile judge, and became attached to the movement – not an inappropriate name for one who had experienced a *tremendum*. During the earlier, aggressive period, the audience was often known to be subject to violent “feeling storms” of the type that are not uncommon in other revivalist movements.

A TRIAL

p. 91. Swm. MSS., iii. 69, ii. 847.

p. 92. Ibid., iii. 66. Colonel Gervase Benson had belonged to the Seekers, before he became a Quaker. He had been Mayor of Kendal and, before the Civil War, “Commissary of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, the chief ecclesiastical office under the Bishop of Chester.” He was one of the most influential men in the North of England at this time. See Braithwaite: *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 91.

FOX AND NAYLER

p. 99. I hope to examine the psychologically interesting comparative material more closely in another connection. It is characteristic that Nayler’s call came in an auditory and not in a visual manner.

NAYLER AS AUTHOR

p. 109. Margaret Fell “Despatched [18th February, 1653] his [Nayler’s] tract ‘Spiritual Wickednesse,’ with some others, to her husband in London, to be printed. This appears to be the first batch of quaker tracts that was sent to press.” – *Dictionary of National Biography*; see under Nayler.

The facsimile described as Nayler’s handwriting in the Swedish edition has been shown to be by another hand and has therefore been replaced by the closing words and signature of Nayler’s letter to the town of Bradford, which is undoubtedly in his own hand. Although the facsimile previously used is not in Nayler’s hand, it is by a contemporary copyist. Four

different seventeenth-century copies of this letter in the Library at Friends House assign the authorship to Nayler. The point of interest, which prompted the author to introduce this text, is that Nayler's letter, from which the following passage is taken, is printed as one of G. Fox's *Epistles*, No. 47 (1653). "Take heed y^t none of y^u walke by Jmitation of others; for though y^e way they walke in be good, to them who are in y^e Light, yet thou art in darkness, & knowes not whither thou goest, nor Can thou receive any Strength from God, to Carrie y^e on in y^t way, nor reward for it: & thy fellowship is not wth God, in y^t way, but wth Men, nor Canst thou be Clenced in this way, but y^e End will be Lost Labour; & of this sort are they y^t tourne back, & speak Evill of y^e way of God, when y^e way of God they never Came in, nor his Life, peace, & power, y^t is in his way they never knew, yet those who knowes not y^e pfect way of God, belecueth such, & by these y^e offences Comes, & y^e Stumbleing blocks, wherby many are offended; but woe to such by whom this Comes: And take heed of Judging y^e Mesure of others, but Every one Mind y^r owne, & there y^u famish y^e busie Mind, & high Conseates, & soe peace springs up amongst y^u, & y^e deuisions is Judged; & this know y^t divercitys of Gifts, but yet one Spirit, & Union therein to all who wth it are guided." – From Portfolio 36, No. 110, probably the earliest of the four copies of this letter. Text and information kindly provided by the Librarian, Friends House. – Translator's note.

Nayler "became famous for a fervid oratory, rich in pathos, and with more cohesion of matter than was common in quaker appeals at that period." – *Dictionary of National Biography*, the article on Nayler. Farnsworth, Nayler, and Fox published together a small tract: *To you that are called by the name of Baptists*. Fox is much more brief than the others and has far more authoritative pondus.

p. 112. I have come to the conclusion that Nayler – through Winstanley and through the misery of the war which he had seen at close quarters (?), independently

of and perhaps earlier than Fox (?) – had reached the firm conviction that great ends cannot be attained by war.

p. 114. Nayler counted with a displaced Deity, not only with displaced passions.

The title-page of Nayler's collected writings is as follows: *A Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles, and Papers written by James Nayler . . . With an Impartial Relation of the most Remarkable Transactions Relating to his Life.*

Dan. xi. 35. And some of them of Understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, &c.

Micah vii. 8. Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy, when I fall I shall rise, &c.

Psal. cxxx. 4. With the Lord is Forgiveness, that he may be feared.

London: Printed and Sold by the Assigns of J. Sowle, in White-Hart Court, in Gracious-Street, and at the Bible in George-Yard, Lombard Street, 1716.

This collection includes the following larger works by Nayler:

Truth cleared from Scandals.

The Power and Glory of the Lord.

A discovery of the Wisdom which is from beneath.

Churches gathered against Christ.

Love to the Lost.

How Sin is strengthened.

The Lamb's War against the Man of Sin.

What the Possession of the Living faith is.

A Door opened.

An Account from the Children of light.

Milk for Babes and Meat for Strong Men.

Published works by Nayler which are not included in the collection edited by George Whitehead. (This list is selected from J. Smith: *Catalogue of Friends Books*, 1867.)

Spiritual wickednesse, in Heavenly places, proclaiming Freedom to the Forme, but persecuting the power: An answer to Freedom of Religion Worship. No date.

Several petitions Answered, That were put up by the

Priests of Westmorland, against Jas. Nayler & Geo. Fox. By Jas. Nayler & Geo. Fox. 1653.

Saul's Errand to Damascus, with his Packet of Letters from the High Priests against the Disciples of the Lord. 1653.

Several Letters written to the Saints of the Most High to build them up in the Truth as it is in Jesus. Part by Jas. Nayler. 1654.

Several Papers: Some of them given forth by George Fox; others by Jas. Nayler. 1653.

A True Discoverie of Faith, and a brief Manifestation of the "Ground" upon which we stand, to those who desire to know it. With a Declaration why we cannot repair the Idolls Temples, Nor pay wages to a Clerk. Also an Answer to severall Queries put forth by one John Reyner. 1655.

An Answer to the Booke called, "The Perfect Pharisee under Monkish Holinesse: wherein is layd open, who they are that oppose the Fundamentall Principle of the Doctrine of the Gospel. About 1655.

A Discovery of the Man of Sin, acting in *A Mystery of Iniquitie*, Pleading for his Kingdom, against the coming of Christ to take away Sin. Or, An Answer to a Book set forth by [various people].

To you that are called by the name of Baptists, or the Baptized people, etc. By Jas. Nayler, Richard Farnsworth and Geo. Fox. About 1655.

Satan's Design discovered; who under a pretence of worshipping Christ's Person in Heaven, would exclude God and Christ, the Spirit and Light, out of the World. An answer to *Thomas Moor*. 1655.

A Second Answer to Thomas Moor, To that which he calls his defence against the poyson, etc. 1655.

An answer to a Book called The Quaker's Catechism put out by Richard Baxter, wherein the Slanderer is Searched. 1655.

An Answer to twenty-eight Queries Sent out by *Francis Harris* to those People he calls *Quakers*. 1655.

A discovery of the Beast, Got into the seat of the False Prophet, who hath opened his Mouth in Blasphemy. 1655.

A Vindication of Truth, As held forth in a Book, entituled, Love to the Lost. 1656.

Foot yet in the Snare: though the Beast hath healed his Wound, and now pretends Liberty. Discovered in an answer to several people. 1656.

A Publike Discovery, of the Open Blindness of Babel's Builders. 1656.

Deceit brought to Day-Light, in an answer to Thomas Collier. 1656.

Weaknes above Wickednes, and Truth above Subtilty, Which is the Quaker's Defence against the Boaster and his deceitfull slanders. Clearly seen in an Answer to a Book called *Quaker's Quaking.* 1656.

Wickedness Weighed: in An Answer to a Book, called *The Quakers Quaking Principle, Examined and Refuted.* 1656.

The Railer Rebuked, in reply to a paper subscribed Ellis Bradshaw, who calls it *The Quakers whitest Devil Unveiled.* No date.

The Light of Christ, and the Word of Life, cleared from the Deceits of the Deceiver, and his litteral weapons turned upon his owne Head. (Answer to Matthew Caffin and William Jeffrey.) 1656.

Antichrist in Man Christ's Enemy, who hath been pretending for Christ in notion, but now at his appearance stands up with all his power to deny his Light . . . An Answer to a Book titled *Antichrist in Man, the Quakers Idol.* 1656.

An Answer to some Queries put out by one John Pendarves, in a Book, called *Arrowes against Babylon, &c.* 1656.

How the ground of Temptation is in the heart of the Creature. No date.

TO LONDON

p. 126. Swm. MSS., iii. 76.

p. 127. Examples of joint letter to Fox and Nayler: from Howgill, 18. xi. 1655; *Journal*, 246 and others; Swm. MSS., iv. 229. Cf. Barclay: *Inner Life*, p. 343.

POPULAR PREACHER IN LONDON

p. 132. Caton MSS., 2.

p. 134. Fox's *Journal*, i. 200. The teaching of freedom from sin (cf. p. 114) was intended to prevent moral apathy, in obedience to the command *Be ye perfect*.

p. 137. The quotation from Fox is found in Portfolio 33, No. 11.

A CHAPTER ON WOMEN IN THE QUAKER RANKS

p. 139. Quotations from Brailsford: *Quaker Women*, and from R. Barclay: *Apology*.

Regarding the puritan family as a Theocracy, see Schücking: *Die Familie im Puritanismus*.

p. 142. Burrough to Martha Simmonds. Markey MSS., 120.

IN THE WHIRLWIND

p. 144. Letter from Nayler to Margaret Fell. Swm. MSS., iii. 82.

THE CRISIS

p. 155. George Bishop writes in *The throne of Truth Exalted* that there were no stairs. For Martha's evidence see Appendix, p. 307.

FOX AND NAYLER ONCE MORE

It is well known that every neurosis tends to make the sufferer foreign to reality.

pp. 158. Bolton's impression of Nayler is communicated in a letter from Audland to Margaret Fell. Swm. MSS., i. 12. Further quotations from Swm. MSS., iii. 12, 153, 193.

p. 165 ff. Hubberthorne's long letter from the Gibson MSS., v. 93. It was sent from Bristol, 4th October, 1656. Fox lays stress on how a matter appears to others, a political viewpoint, which is entirely foreign to Nayler.

Since the Swedish edition of James Nayler was published, Hubberthorne's letter has been printed in the

Journal of the Friends Historical Society, vol. xxvi. 13. The introduction preceding it differs in point of view from that of the present author. A portion of the letter, there omitted, suggests that Nayler's refusal to give a direct answer to Hubberthorne's enquiry was due to his reluctance to discuss with anyone else his private relationship with Fox. – Translator's note.

p. 168. Robert Rich: *Hidden Things brought to light*.

“ THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL ”

Motto from *Part of His Answer to the Book, called, The Fanatick History*, London, 1660. *Works*, p. 653.

p. 178. From George Bishop's letter to Margaret Fell. Swm. MSS., i. 188.

p. 180. “Those who believe that Messiah has come, have thrust forward a soldier, James Nayler. He had a wife, but deceived in London other women, persuading them that they were pregnant by the Holy Ghost.” – From Swed. transl. of *Pantheon Anabaptisticum*.

A TRIAL

p. 181. Some of the details of the trial are from Farmer's and Deacon's writings (see *Bibliography*). Ralph Farmer was Presbyterian minister of St. Nicholas, Bristol. Convinced as he was that the Quakers were disguised Jesuits and Franciscans, he had earlier given vent to his wrath over the leniency of the Protectorate towards them. Farmer led the hearing in Bristol. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, the article on Nayler: “Miall represents Nayler as expelled from the Topcliffe church on a charge of adultery. . . . The Topcliffe records, to which Miall refers, do not begin till 15th February, 1653-4. His real source is Scatcherd; and Scatcherd relies upon Deacon, who, on Marshal's authority and that of his church, tells a gossiping story of Nayler's familiarity with one Mrs. Roper.”

p. 184. George Fox received at Launceston extravagantly effusive letters. Cf. the correspondence between *Herder and Caroline*.

“THE JAMES NAYLER PARLIAMENT”

pp. 191 ff. Mainly from Burton's *Diary*.

p. 194. The Instrument of Government contained the following:

“XXXVII. That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship or discipline publicly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in, the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion; so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts: provided this liberty be not extended to Popery or Prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness.

“XXXVIII. That all laws, statutes and ordinances, and clauses in any law, statute or ordinance to the contrary of the aforesaid liberty, shall be esteemed as null and void.”¹

NAYLER, CROMWELL, AND THE CROWN

p. 207. The House of Commons declared on 17th March, 1649, that “It is and hath been found by experience, that the office of a King in this nation and Ireland, and to have the power thereof in any single person, is unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and public interest of the people . . . be it therefore enacted and ordained by the present Parliament . . . that the office of a King in this nation shall not henceforth reside in or be exercised by any one single person.”²

The debate is reported at this length, because the picture of the times that it furnishes serves as a background to Nayler.

p. 212. Burton does not comment on the proceedings. He voted for the death penalty and evidently approved of the harangues of men like Mr. Downing.

p. 213. Sindercomb took his own life the day before he

¹ S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 385-6.

was to have "hanged on the gallows till he be half dead, and then to be cut down, and his intrails and bowells taken out, and burnt in his own sight." He left a letter where he says: "God knoweth my heart; I do take this course, because I would not have all the open shame of the world executed upon my body. . . . I do not fear my life, but do trust God with my soule. I did this thing without the privity of any person in the world. I do, before God and the world, clear my keeper, my sisters, mother, or brother, or any other of my relations; but it was done alone by myself, I say by me, Miles Sindercom, 13 day, 1656."¹

As solemnly as Parliament sacrificed Charles I, so solemnly did Miles Sindercomb regard the new "tyrant" murder.

p. 214. The vote was taken on March 25th, but the address to Cromwell was delivered six days later. — Translator's note.

AT THE PILLORY

p. 219. I understand that what actually happened was this: Nayler, tied by his hands to a cart, had to run after it, while bailiffs on horseback followed, administering the whips.

p. 227. The author of *Memoirs*, who, like the early biographers of St. Francis, loved to draw parallels, adds: "This was done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Mark xv. 38."² Cf. reference to *Hidden Things* with similar references, p. 168.

ECHOES

p. 232. Cf. Chapter IV, *A Parenthesis: Human Type and Community Idea*.

FROM THE PRISON JOURNALS

p. 239. The quoted *Journals* are reprinted in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. xxiii.

p. 244. A date given by George Whitehead for his

¹ Burton, i. 375.

² *Memoirs*, p. 53.

meeting with Nayler in the North of England suggests that Nayler was granted leave from prison. But the date may not be accurate.

BEHIND THE BARS

p. 247. The remark concerning the gifts which do not avail with God would naturally be applied to Nayler himself, but the writer knew that it also concerned Fox.

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

p. 257. A letter from Alexander Parker to Margaret Fell, June 1658. In giving the date in the text, I have used the new style, whereas the actual MS. is dated two months earlier.

A FREE BEING

p. 264. A letter to Charles II. *Works*, p. 598.

p. 266. George Bishop: *The throne of Truth exalted over the Powers of Darkness*, Bristol, 1657. His letter to Margaret Fell quoted from *Nayleriana*, p. 21.

pp. 267 ff. From *The History of Thomas Ellwood written by himself*.

“THE DAY OF MERCY”

p. 271. Dewsbury's letter in Swm. MSS., iv. 134.

p. 272. From *Hidden Things*.

J. N. to M. F., 1656: “And to G. ff If thou hast oppertunity who is deare to me in y^e love of god, wch all y^e subtill workeings of y^e enemy, I knew shall never breake, though he have long stood in y^e way, whom y^e Lord of Loue & Jnocency remoue in his owne way & time, for wch I waite suffering, & am not without hope in y^e end to attaine an euerlasting vnity, amongst them that are sanctified & sanctifying.” – Swm. MSS., iii. 83.

p. 273. An entirely false Recantation was printed in Nayler's name. He protested strongly against it. Could it be this unauthentic Recantation that Fox refers to in his *Journal*?

UN

pp. 274 ff. The Song of Praise is printed in Nayler's *Works*, p. xlix. ff.

THE WAY HOME

p. 282. Nayler's Last Testimony, which has become a classic, is practically the only passage by Nayler, generally quoted in Quaker literature.

EPILOGUE

p. 283. The quotation from Professor Weingarten's *Revolutionskirchen Englands*, Leipzig, 1868, is mentioned with reservation by Barclay in his *Inner Life*, p. 425.

Hubberthorne died in 1662; Burrough in the same year; Howgill in 1668; Dewsbury first in 1688.

Robert Rich died in 1679; Martha Simmonds in 1665, while on a journey to Maryland.

APPENDIX

MARTHA SIMMONDS' EVIDENCE, from Farmer: *Sathan Inthron'd in his Chair of Pestilence*, London, 1657.

"Being among the people called *Quakers* in *London*, I was moved to *declare to the world*, and often they would judge me exceedingly, that I was too forward to run before I was sent, and that nevertheless I loved them well, as being men of *pure life*, but I was moved by *the power*, I could not stay though they sometimes denied me, yet I was forced to go, and *my word did prosper*; and the last service I was in, was *Ware* and *Hartford*, and there I was faithfull, and then I came to *London* to them, and then we were all one, and when I came, I did not know what I should do further, and then I was *moved of the Lord* to go to *James Nailer*, and tell him I wanted Justice, and he being harsh to me, at length these words came to me to speak to him, which I did, and struck him down; *How are the mighty men fallen, I came to Jerusalem and behold a cry, and behold an oppression*, which pierced and struck him down with tears from that day; and he lay from that day in exceeding sorrow for about three daies, and all that while *the power arose in me*, which I did not expect; seeing I knew he was in that condition: But after three daies he came to me, and confessed *I had been clear in service to the Lord*, and that he had wronged me, and should have done Justice, but did not do it. And then he lay at my house three daies, and then they all having a single eye looking on him as being a man *upon whom the life was born up*, they seeing him so changed from that reigning power that was in him, that *had overcome all the Priests that came to him and others*, Then *they all concluded that I had bewitched him*, when alas I was as innocent as a childe, and they (because he could not go amongst them) all set upon me, that *I had bewitched him*: so they came and plucked him away from me, I thought they had not had such a spirit in them, but I suffered in

all, and he went away and came to Bristoll, where he was in the same manner in their meeting and did not speak, and after the meeting, they plucked me and held me, and I sang and after the meeting was ended, they plucked him in, and they all followed him, and so came into a house by the Orchard, which was about twelve weeks since, and there was amongst them Captain Bease, Howgill, Burrow, and Captain Bishop and others, and they plucked me and the rest exceedingly & used us very sorely. In so much that J. Nailer did sweat exceedingly, and we were in danger of our lives, & they threw me down the stairs: and when they had their wills on him, they let me and him come to the White Hart, and there also they came and used us sorely. And then James Nailer went towards Exeter, and I towards London."

EXTRACTS from *How the ground of Temptation is in the heart of the Creature* by J. Naylor. No date.

"For no thing or creature (without thy sence adularate with it) can tempt thee."

"And the temptation is, and in every man works, according to the place they are in, or gift they have received from God (be it inward or outward), wherein the greatest and best gifts a man or creature may receive from God, are accompanied with the chiefest and worst temptations."

"And let men be quiet until God arise to be Judge of the controversie, and the fierce and high will then be bowed down (to the foot of God), and the bitter assuaged and allayed, and all will be cool, and in good order; for I am sencible the tempter hath got ground (in this day) over the conditions of many, in whom God hath begun a good work."

"And thus much I know, and am made sencible of, that to terrifie people with words and exclamations and outcries against any sin and offence to God's spirit, that doth not reach Gods witnesse (wherein the way to escape the evil and danger, as well as the danger it self is shewn) doth become a vain bable in this day of God, and at best can but make subject for wrath."

“For which cause I may be hearkened to by the weak, and the poor may have an eye and ear well inclined (in this particular), and a mind bended on my complaint, and ready to receive me in that which thinks and means well to all, and no ill to any . . . but no condition I have found like to that which is low and poor, and mean, (in selfs eye); for in this I have been comforted under the power and pangs of death (when like a flood my soul was compassed about therewith), and the life of submission to the will of God, is that whereby I have known many firey darts of Sathan quenched.”

“And let none be too confident in selfs work and approbation (in the first mans will, and that mans part), but let such that think they stand, take heed lest they fall. . . . Think not therefore I will accuse thee to God (in these things), for one is judge that is neer thee. . . . For the time is come, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.”

Quoted from pp. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Satans Design discovered: Who under a pretence of worshipping Christs Person in Heaven, would exclude God and Christ, the Spirit and Light, out of the world. . . .

Clearly laid open in an Answer to Thomas Moor who calls his Book an Antidote against the spreading Infections, &c. By a Servant to Truth, called James Nayler.

London, Printed for Giles Calvert, at the BLack Spread-Eagle near the West end of Pauls, 1655.

(The introduction refers to a debate which had preceded the pamphlet written by Moor, *The Manifesterian, an Antidote against the spreading Infections, &c.* Moor accused the Quakers of denying and preaching “down the person of Jesus of Nazareth, of the seed of David.” Nayler defended the Quakers in a letter, which Moor published and misrepresented.)

“Could he (Satan) limit him (Christ) only into Heaven and perswade people never to waite for his appearance in their hearts, then might he rule the creature without controule . . . so he sets his Ministers to Preach Christ without, in literall tradition, that so he may keepe his house in

peace within, and so keepe God out of his Temple, and dwelling place which is the bodies of his Saints: but now the Lord is comming and taking people to himself whom he is clensing; and some he hath clensed, and is in his dwelling place."

"When as all the friendship he intends (when truly weighed) is to make an eternal separation betwixt the Creature and the Creator, and to keep God out of his dwelling place, yea, and as far distant as the Heaven is from the Earth, as thou dost thy Book who denies the possession of God in his Saints. As for thy saying that Paul saw Christ with his bodily eies, I say they may beleive thee who hath not seene him, and who knows no better."

"The Saint's God was ever a Spirit, and dwelt in them in spirit, but the Heathens had their Gods ever without them. . . . And they that had not God abiding in them they thought to have eternall life in the Scripture, and from the letter they crucified God, This was all the life they found in the Scriptures, who had not the word abiding in them, John v. 38, 39: John xix. 7."

"And saith Christ, ye have not known him, but I know him, and if I should say I knew him not, I should be a liar like you, John viii. 55, and so saith all the Sons of God in their measure." (Cf. Nayler's answers in court.)

"Thy Generation knowes too much of the glory of the World, to know what the Throne of God is."

"And thou tellest much what need we have of Christ in the Heavens, but didst thou know thy condition, thou would'st see as much need of him here also, to guide thee out of the World, and these Pharisaical wayes: For, who hath him not with them to lead out of the World and give victory here, will finde little benefit by his being in Heaven."

"I say, the Apostles preached the spirit and light within, shining in their hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. . . . And none of you can any more walk in this way, then the Camel go through the eye of a needle, whiles you stand in your worldly Glory."

"But sayst thou, While People are here, they must be imperfect in every thing. Truly, I know not how it should

be any other with them, who deny the Workes and Sufferings of Christ in them; when Satans Work is perfect, then theirs may: but the least Work of Christ, in whomsoever he workes it, is perfect."

"Thou saist, Christ Jesus is the way, the Truth, and the Life, and none can come to the Father, but by him. I say that these are true words: but thou that makest it thy work to preach him out of the World till Doomes-day, and confine him in the Heavens alone, hast excluded him for being a way to those now in the world, to lead them out of the World, which cannot ascend up into Heaven, there to walk in him as a way: so thou hast shut up the Kingdome against men as thy Fathers ever did."

"There is no manifestation of the Spirit of God upon earth, but what is within, and those that it witnessed, it manifested, witnessed it dwelling in them."

"And for accusing us at our meeting, for incivilities, as for calling you liars, Serpents; Sots, and such like: I say, if any did call you, that you are not, you are more innocent then they; I justify no such thing, but this I know, and many other that was there, that one of thy companions had his staffe up to have knock't me down in the yard gnashing at me with his teeth, and narrowly I escaped, that it was not so: had you had any such carriage from us, reason might have judged it uncivill, but a Word from us is counted an offence, when Actions from the world is counted none."

"1. That the light of Christ is the first principle, that shews a man his condition, and leads to Christ the Saviour; and without it, the Gospel is hid from every Creature living, and without it none can read with profit."

"3. That the word of God is spiritual; and who hath it, hath it in their heart."

"10. That no man can receive the things of Gods spirit, but who minde somewhat of God in them, to receive it withall."

"11. That the least measure of Gods spirit is an infalible guide, and without it no man knowes Christ, nor can judge of any thing of God, or his truth, his Kingdom, or the way to it; or the Devil and his subtelties, but lies open

to be deceived in all things, and to be led by men of corrupt mindes, in whom the Devil is."

"12. That the ground of all Errors, Sects and Opinions, Heresies and blasphemies that are in the world, is in being led from the guidance of this spirit, and all live in error, but who are guided by it, but none ever errs, who was guided by it alone, nor ever shall."

Quoted from pp. 6, 11, 12, 18, 19, 21, 23, 31, 45, 46, 51, 56.

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